

EVOLUTION  
AND  
PRESBYTERIANISM.  
BY  
HAY WATSON SMITH

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Evolution and  
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*EVOLUTION*

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AND

*PRESBYTERIANISM*

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BY

HAY WATSON SMITH

PASTOR SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

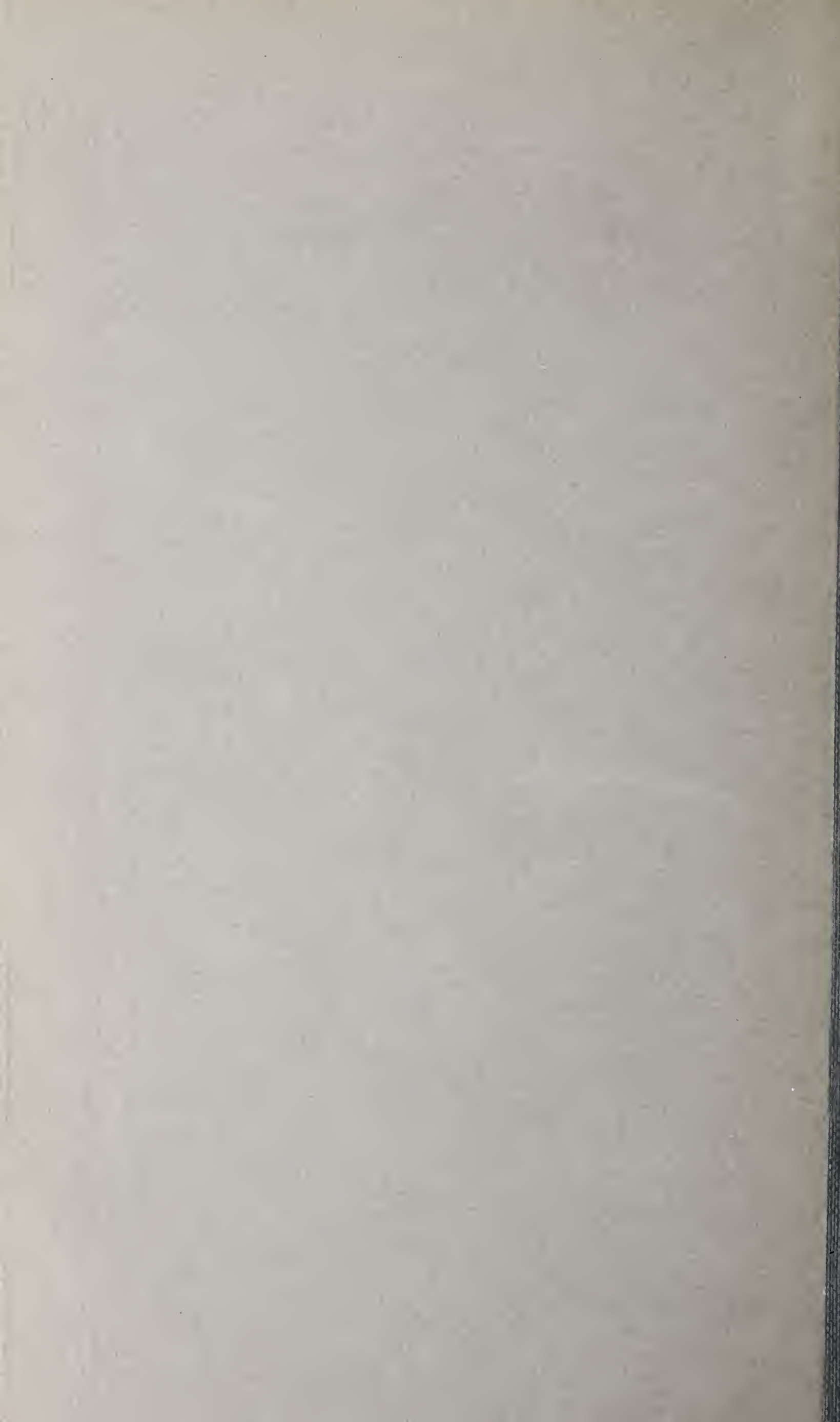
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ALLSOPP AND CHAPPLE

1922



Continent, April 5, 1923  
BRINGING LIGHT FROM SCOTLAND

NO CONVENTIONAL BOOK REVIEW will quite suffice to lay the emphasis that the present Presbyterian moment requires on a remarkable pamphlet which has just been published by its author, Rev. Hay Watson Smith, pastor of Second Presbyterian church in Little Rock, Arkansas. It makes an attractive piece of typography, but is still more admirable as a sensible and timely piece of brainwork. The title is "Evolution and Presbyterianism," and the object of the brochure is to show that if the matter be judged according to the experience of the Presbyterians of Scotland, who are certainly the original and authentic breed of Presbyterians, there is no difficulty at all about interweaving Presbyterianism and an intelligent acceptance of evolution as God's customary creative method.

This object the booklet accomplishes conclusively. Mr. Smith has brought together, beside his own reasoning in the subject, a singularly valuable conspectus of utterances and judgments from all the great modern leaders of Scottish church life. Every one of them, he proves, believed or believes in evolution. Also, every one of them is on record as repudiating the dogma of literal inerrancy in the inspired Scriptures. This list notably includes the late Dr. James Orr, whom the fundamentalists in the United States have strangely adopted as their patron saint, although he was a typical higher critic and had no patience with the idea that the letter of the Bible may be opposed as a barrier to the teachings of modern science.

Mr. Bryan, if he reads this pamphlet, will find himself more of a heretic in Presbyterianism than the evolutionists whom he so savagely denounces. In fact, if Mr. Smith's illuminating pamphlet could have general and really candid reading in the church, it would rid the Presbyterian denomination in this country of all further contention over this fictitious disagreement between Genesis and science. For it shows clearly that our Presbyterian cousins in Scotland have long since eliminated every fear that science can spoil the Bible, and have gone forward free of all that dread in joyful fidelity to the great gospel which the Lord Christ gave for the salvation of the world.

A valuable supplement to Mr. Smith's work is a much smaller pamphlet entitled "Evolution versus Special Creation," written by Dr. Horace N. Mateer, professor of biology in the College of Wooster—a name of Presbyterian honor in a steadfast Presbyterian school. Though published earlier—we are happy to note that the booklet is in its third printing—the argument of Professor Mateer will be best appreciated by those who have first followed Mr. Smith. From the two no open-minded man will conclude that Presbyterians must believe in evolution, but all except the inveterately shut-minded will see that Presbyterians may believe in evolution without the slightest detriment to their Presbyterianism—or Christianity.

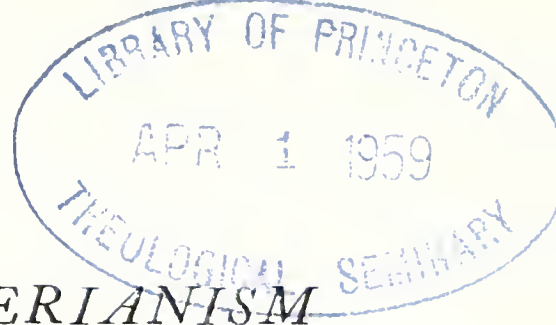


*EVOLUTION and*  
*PRESBYTERIANISM*

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*EVOLUTION and PRESBYTERIANISM*

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BY  
HAY WATSON SMITH  
PASTOR SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

LITTLE ROCK,  
ALLSOPP & CHAPPLE  
1923

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TO  
J. R. S.



## PREFACE

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This pamphlet, prepared primarily for the members of the Second Presbyterian Church, is the outgrowth of two sermons on evolution preached some months ago. Its purpose, in general, is to bring before thoughtful Christian people certain subjects that are seldom given a fair hearing in our conservative religious papers. I have tried to make every part of the discussion subserve the interests of progressive religious thought through a consideration of facts.

In arguing for evolution and its compatibility with Presbyterianism I have avoided everything of a technical nature and have appealed only to considerations the force of which anyone can understand, however slight may be his knowledge of either evolution or Presbyterianism.

My very cordial thanks are due to the publishers whose works I have, with their permission, quoted so freely. It is these excerpts that give to this discussion whatever value it may have. I am also indebted to Prof. William Berryman Scott, of Princeton University, to Dr. Arthur S. Hoyt, of Auburn Theological Seminary, N. Y., and to H. Smith Richardson, Greensboro, N. C., for reading the manuscript, exclusive of the appendixes. Also my thanks are due to Miss Wisner, secretary of the Second Church, for most efficient aid in preparing the manuscript for the press.

HAY WATSON SMITH.

Little Rock, Arkansas,  
December, 1922.



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When I first came to the notion . . . . of a succession of extinction of species, and creation of new ones, going on perpetually now, and through an indefinite period of the past, and to continue for ages to come, all in accommodation to the changes which must continue in the inanimate and habitable earth, the idea struck me as the grandest which I had ever conceived, so far as regards the attributes of the Presiding Mind.—From a letter of Sir Charles Lyell to Sir John Herschel (1836).

I asserted—and I repeat—that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel ashamed of recalling, it would rather be a man—a man of restless and versatile intellect—who, not content with success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice.—Thomas Huxley in his famous reply to Bishop Wilberforce (1860).



## Chapter I.

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The Reasonableness of Accepting the Theory  
of Evolution.



## CHAPTER I.

When Mr. Bryan was beginning his public crusade against evolution he wrote to a Baptist minister in Kentucky: "This movement will sweep the country and we will drive Darwinism from our schools. The enemy is already fighting. The agnostics who are undermining the faith of our students will be glad enough to teach anything the people want taught when the people speak with emphasis."<sup>1</sup> No part of this prediction has been fulfilled. The theory of evolution is still taught in college and university, and will no doubt continue to be taught until a better theory is found to supplant it.

For his crusade against evolution, no friend of science need bear Mr. Bryan any grudge. It is simple truth to say that he rendered a service of real value to science and to the people of the country; for by reason of his prominence as a politician and the high esteem in which he is held by many of his fellow-citizens, Mr. Bryan caused a truly great subject to become a topic of public and private discussion in every part of the land. The controversy which he provoked sent multitudes of inquirers to the libraries and book-stores who had probably never before read anything of a serious nature on evolution.

Against the theory of evolution Mr. Bryan brings a great many indictments, but they may all be comprised under two heads:

First, that the theory is false, having no foundation in fact. "There is not one fact in nature that supports the Darwinian hypothesis." "There is not a single fact in the universe that can be cited to prove that man is descended from the lower animals." "Darwinism is not science at all; it is guesses strung together." "A guess with nothing in the universe to support it." "Not only groundless, but absurd."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Science*, Feb. 17, 1922. The Science Press, Utica, N. Y.

<sup>2</sup>*The Bible and its Enemies*, p. 20. *In His Image*, pp. 91, 94, 116.

Secondly, that evolution tends to irreligion and is anti-Christian. "The hypothesis to which the name of Darwin has been given . . . is obscuring God and weakening all the virtues that rest upon the religious tie between God and man." "Darwinism leads to a denial of God." "Darwinism is directly antagonistic to Christianity." "Darwinism chills the spiritual nature and quenches the fire of religious enthusiasm." "The evolutionist guesses himself away from God." "Darwin . . . tells us that God has been asleep for millions of years." "Darwinism puts God far away." "The greatest menace to the Church today."<sup>1</sup>

While few people of intelligence would go to such extremes as Mr. Bryan does in these charges, it is nevertheless true that multitudes of people, among whom are some of our best Church members, agree with Mr. Bryan in his opposition to evolution. Although such opposition is natural, it is very unfortunate. The evidence for the substantial truth of the theory of evolution is very strong, and there is nothing in the theory that contravenes any essential doctrine of the Christian religion. At the same time it is no doubt true that acceptance of the theory of evolution will require the recasting of some parts of the older theology—a task that should be approached with pleasure, not with fear and foreboding.

Evolution is of two kinds, inorganic and organic. Inorganic evolution is the theory that the physical universe is a development from primal matter into the complex and wonderful structure that we know today—a development extending through illimitable years and on a scale inconceivably vast. With inorganic evolution we are not concerned in this discussion.

Organic evolution has to do with life. It is the theory that all life as we see it today is the result of a gradual unfolding or development from some simple form or forms of primal life—a development extending

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<sup>1</sup>In *His Image*, pp. 88, 99, 110, 113, 123, 134. *The Bible and Its Enemies*, p. 19.

through many millions of years. As expressed by Darwin in the last paragraph of the *Origin of Species* (1859): "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms, most beautiful and most wonderful, have been, and are being, evolved."<sup>1</sup>

As it relates to the human species, the evolutionary theory holds that man is a primate, and that all the races of men have slowly developed, through many hundreds of thousands of years, from some unknown primate ancestor. It is not held by evolutionists that man is derived from any lower species of primate living today.

It should be kept in mind that the theory of evolution, organic or inorganic, is nothing more than an attempt to explain *how* things have come to be what they are. "It is not a power or a principle; it is a process—a process of becoming." Every scientist knows that beneath or within all the innumerable changes which the theory of evolution attempts to explain—whether in the most distant nebula revealed by the telescope or in the tiniest cell under the microscope—there is a Spirit or Energy the secret of whose power remains inscrutable. Evolution, as Henry Drummond said, is simply "God's *method* in creation."

It is not my purpose in this chapter to attempt to prove, by direct appeal to scientific evidence, the truth of the evolutionary theory. That would require a volume and could be satisfactorily done only by a

<sup>1</sup>A recent definition: "Organic evolution means that the present is the child of the past and the parent of the future. It is not a power or a principle; it is a process—a process of becoming. It means that the present-day animals and plants and all the subtle inter-relations between them have arisen in a natural knowable way from a preceding state of affairs on the whole somewhat simpler, and that again from forms and inter-relations simpler still, and so on backwards and backwards for millions of years till we lose all clues in the thick mist that hangs over life's beginnings." (*The Outline of Science*, by J. Arthur Thompson, vol. 1., p. 56. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1922).

specialist. My purpose is to show that on *general grounds* it is reasonable to accept the theory—far more reasonable than to reject it; and it should be remembered that it is on just such general grounds that the knowledge that most of us possess must always rest. Four general considerations may be given that should dispose an unprejudiced mind favorably towards the theory.

1. The first of these considerations is that the theory is accepted by all the men who best know the facts. The students of life—its origin, development, structure, functions, and distribution—are known as biologists, and the biologists of the world are practically unanimous in their acceptance of the fact of evolution.<sup>1</sup> “Almost the only zoologist,” says Prof. Scott, “of recognized standing who has taken a pronounced and positive position against the theory, is Professor Fleischmann, of Erlangen. . . . This opinion of Professor Fleischmann’s stands almost entirely alone in modern biological literature.”<sup>2</sup> Professor E. G. Conklin, of the department of biology in Princeton University, writes (1922): “No biological investigator in the world has abandoned belief in the doctrine of evolution so far as I am aware. I have repeatedly challenged the opponents of evolution to name a single working biologist in the world today who does not accept the truth of the doctrine of evolution and not one has ever met this challenge so far as I am aware.” So the men who have made a life-long study of the facts of biology are practically unanimous in accepting the theory of evolution as offering the best explanation of those facts.

Concerning this unanimity three things may be said: First, it by no means extends to all the details of

<sup>1</sup> Biology is the most comprehensive branch of science. It includes zoology, botany, physiology, anatomy, cytology, embryology, and a number of allied sciences.

<sup>2</sup> *The Theory of Evolution*, by William Berryman Scott, Ph.D., LL.D., Professor of Geology and Paleontology in Princeton University, pp. 1 and 2. 1917. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Co.

the theory. Biologists differ widely as to the way in which evolution operates and as to its causes, and this difference has given rise to the belief that they differ as to the *fact* of evolution. Such is not the case. A scientist may accept only in part Darwin's explanation of the theory of evolution, or may confess ignorance of how this or that factor works, or may doubt whether the origin of species has been satisfactorily explained, and yet be a convinced evolutionist. Just what part in evolution is played by such factors as variability, the struggle for existence, natural selection, and heredity, is a matter about which biologists may well differ. In spite of all our knowledge life remains a thing of mystery, and concerning mystery there is always difference of opinion.

A good illustration of the differences among biologists as to the *modus operandi* of evolution, and of the mistaken inferences drawn therefrom by the public, is found in the address of Professor William Bateson, the eminent English biologist, delivered in Toronto last December (1921) before the *American Association for the Advancement of Science*. Professor Bateson admitted how little we know of some of the processes of evolution, and on the ground of this admission he was widely quoted, not only as having expressed doubts as to the truth of evolution, but as having rejected the theory outright. Yet here is what he says in the closing paragraph of his address: "I have put before you very frankly the considerations which have made us agnostic as to the actual mode and processes of evolution. When such confessions are made the enemies of science see their chance. If we cannot declare here and now how species arose, they will obligingly offer us the solutions with which obscurantism is satisfied. Let us then proclaim in precise and unmistakable language that our faith in evolution is unshaken. Every available line of argument converges on this inevitable conclusion. The obscurantist has nothing

to suggest which is worth a moment's attention. The difficulties which weigh upon the professional biologist need not trouble the layman. Our doubts are not as to the reality or truth of evolution, but as to the origin of *species*, a technical, almost domestic, problem. Any day that mystery may be solved. The discoveries of the last twenty-five years enable us for the first time to discuss these questions intelligently and on a basis of fact. That synthesis will follow on analysis, we do not and cannot doubt."<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the unanimity with which scientists accept the theory of evolution must not be understood to mean that they look upon the theory as an unchangeable dogma. Such an attitude would be essentially unscientific. Strictly speaking there are no dogmas in science. "The spirit of science," says Prof. Conklin, "is freedom to seek and to find truth; freedom to hold and to teach any view for which there is rational evidence; recognition that natural knowledge is incomplete and subject to revision, and that there is no legitimate compulsion in science except the compulsion of evidence."<sup>2</sup> And Prof. Curtis: "The very nature of scientific truth makes it clear that the open mind must be maintained, even in matters which the scientist believes to have been firmly established."<sup>3</sup> The theory of evolution is therefore not a dogma with scientists. There is no biologist who would not be glad to discover facts that would justify the modification of the theory, for it is by such discoveries that truth is advanced and that scientists win recognition. If the theory of evolution is ever shown, by evidence at present unavailable, to be a mistaken hypothesis, every lover of truth will discard the theory.

Thirdly, for the average man such unanimity of

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<sup>1</sup> *Science*, Jan. 20, 1922.

<sup>2</sup> *The Direction of Human Evolution*, by Edwin Grant Conklin, Professor of Biology in Princeton University, Preface. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1921.

<sup>3</sup> *Science and Human Affairs*, by Winterton C. Curtis, Ph.D., Professor of Zoology in the University of Missouri, p. 300. Harcourt Brace and Co. 1922.



opinion would, in almost any other branch of science, be conclusive of the probable truth of any theory advanced. If mathematicians, chemists, astronomers, physicists, civil engineers, surgeons, and so forth, were entirely agreed as to any theory in their respective fields, the theory would go unquestioned by the general public. The average man does not deny the theory of relativity, the theory of geyser action, the chromosome theory, or the Mendelian theory. He does not deny that the sun is 92,000,000 miles away, or that an eclipse or a comet will appear as predicted. He is not in such possession of the facts as to enable him intelligently to deny any of these things. He accepts them, as he does thousands of other facts, on the word of those who have qualified themselves to speak with some measure of authority. Why, then, do men reject a theory in the field of biology upon which all biologists are agreed? Answers to this question will be submitted later.

Of course it is true that specialists in any department of knowledge may be mistaken, but their mistakes will be discovered and corrected by themselves or by better specialists. The appeal must always be from knowledge to fuller knowledge, not from knowledge to ignorance. Where scientific knowledge is sought we are compelled to rely upon specialists, even though we fully realize their fallibility.

2. The second consideration favoring evolution is the fact that the evidence for the theory comes from so many different fields of knowledge. While the evolutionary theory cannot be demonstrated with the certainty of a geometrical theorem, any more than can a score of other accepted theories, yet the convergence of so many lines of argument makes it almost impossible for an unprejudiced mind to doubt its truth.

Professor Scott says: "What gives great weight to the evidence in support of the evolutionary theory is the harmonious concurrence of so many independent

lines of testimony. Whether we deal with classification, or the results of domestication, with comparative anatomy, embryology, blood tests, palaeontology, geographical distribution, or experimental investigation, we find in every instance that the simplest, most satisfactory and least forced interpretation is that which is offered by the theory of evolution. The probability rises in geometrical ratio with each additional, independent class of evidence.”<sup>1</sup>

More fully, Professor Newman: “The task of the student of organic evolution is to gather all of the traces of past changes both in living creatures today and in the preserved remains of creatures of the remote past. A collection of traces of evolution involves many apparently unrelated bodies of phenomena. There are evidences of evolution in the grouping of animals into phyla, classes, orders, families, genera, species, varieties, and races; in the homologies that exist in general structure and in particular organs between different groups of animals and plants; in the orderly process of ontogeny or embryonic development of the individual; in actual blood relationship, based upon chemical reactions; on the succession of extinct animals and plants found as fossils imbedded in the geologic strata; in the present geographical distribution of the various groups of animals and plants, in the light of data derived from a study of geological changes; and finally, in experimental evolution, which involves the observation under experimental control of changes in organisms and the origin of new varieties or elementary species.

“The nature of the proof of organic evolution, then, is this: that, using the concept of organic evolution as a working hypothesis it has been possible to rationalize and render intelligible a vast array of observed phenomena, the real facts upon which evolution rests. Thus classification (taxonomy), comparative anatomy,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Theory of Evolution*, p. 168. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Co.

embryology, palaeontology, zoogeography and phyto-geography, serology, genetics, become consistent and orderly sciences when based upon evolutionary foundations, and when viewed in any other way they are thrown into the utmost confusion. There is no other generalization known to man which is of the least value in giving these bodies of fact any sort of scientific coherence and unity. In other words, the working hypothesis works and is therefore acceptable as truth until overthrown by a more workable hypothesis. Not only does the hypothesis work, but, with the steady accumulation of further facts, the weight of evidence is now so great that it overcomes all intelligent opposition by its sheer mass.”<sup>1</sup>

As already stated, it lies beyond the scope of this pamphlet to give the positive evidence from these various branches of biological science. This can be done only by specialists, and it has been done in scores of works on evolution from the time of Darwin to the present day. To these the reader is referred.<sup>2</sup>

3. Again, evolution is the only hypothesis that gives, or even pretends to give, an answer to the innumerable questions raised in the study of the phenomena of life. As already quoted, Professor Bateson says, “The obscurantist has nothing to suggest which is worth a moment’s attention;” and Professor Newman, “There is no other generalization known to man which is of the least value in giving these bodies of fact any sort of scientific coherence and unity.” So Prof. Curtis: “It is now regarded by competent scientists as the only rational explanation of an overwhelming mass

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<sup>1</sup> *Readings in Evolution, Genetics, and Eugenics*, by Horatio Hackett Newman, Ph. D., Professor of Zoology in the University of Chicago, pp. 58, 59. The University of Chicago Press. 1921.

<sup>2</sup> The two books last quoted are very satisfactory discussions of the subject, and are in a way supplementary. Professor Scott’s book is a brief and authoritative presentation of the theory of evolution “with special reference to the evidence upon which it is founded.” Professor Newman’s book, prefaced by an historical sketch of the evolutionary idea, is a very interesting compilation, with editorial comments, of excerpts from the ablest writers on evolution.

of facts. Its strength lies in the extent to which it gives meaning to so many phenomena that would be meaningless without such an hypothesis.”<sup>1</sup> Such is the testimony of all biologists.

Those who put Genesis against evolution—that is, creation by immediate divine command against creation by gradual evolutionary processes—should remember that the older theory leaves us without an answer to one in a hundred of the countless questions raised in biological science. To take a single class of illustrations: On the older theory, what plausible explanation can be given of such vestigial and rudimentary structures as the vermiform appendix in man, the remnants of legs in certain whales and snakes, teeth in certain embryonic birds, and so forth? These phenomena are “meaningless without such an hypothesis” as evolution.

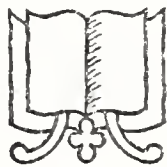
4. Lastly, the theory of evolution as a working hypothesis has stood the test of more than sixty years, and there has never been a time when it was so widely accepted and so influential as it is today. During that period it has been denounced and ridiculed as only one other theory ever was, yet it has steadily won its way; and during that period a vast mass of biological phenomena, entirely unknown to Darwin, has come to light, all of which only adds new confirmation to the theory. Now the sure test of every hypothesis put forth by man, whether in science or politics or religion, is time and the growth of knowledge. Evolution is standing the test.

These, then, are the general considerations that make it reasonable to accept the theory of evolution: It is accepted by all the men who are best acquainted with the facts; it is supported by evidence drawn from many fields, all of which is harmonious and convergent; there is no other theory that even pretends to explain the infinitely varied phenomena of life, past and

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<sup>1</sup> *Science and Human Affairs*, p. 181.

present; and it has stood the test of time with its immense increase of knowledge. Of few other theories, that remain theories at all, can more be said.





## Chapter II.

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Why the Theory is Rejected.

The love of truth is the great moral law, in conformity with which curiosity must be regulated—it is the morality of the intellectual man, being to the understanding what sincerity is to the heart.

There is no principle which needs to be more strenuously inculcated, than that evidence alone should be the measure of assent. In reference to this principle, the whole discipline of the understanding must be conducted. Our anxiety should be to guard against all the influences which preclude the access of evidence, incapacitate us to appreciate its value, and give false measures of judgment, instead of the natural and legitimate laws of belief.

Evidence, and that alone, He has made it obligatory on our understandings to pursue; and whatever opinions we hold that are not the offspring of evidence, that have come to us merely from education, authority, custom, or passion, however true and valuable they may be in themselves, are not held by us in the spirit of truth.—James Henley Thornwell.



## CHAPTER II.

Here an interesting question may be asked: If the evidence for the theory of evolution is so strong, why do so many people reject the theory, often with indignation and ridicule? To that question at least three answers may be suggested: ignorance of the fact, antecedent religious belief, and fear.

1. "Without knowledge of the facts," says Matthew Arnold, "no clearness or fairness of mind can in any study do anything." Many who oppose the theory of evolution have read little or nothing of an authoritative kind on the subject, and are therefore ignorant of the facts. The great majority of men and women have little time for scientific reading. Besides, most books on evolution are of a more or less technical character, taking the average reader into many fields of knowledge with which he is wholly unfamiliar. An appreciative understanding, therefore, of such discussions requires an amount of leisure, a scientific interest, a range of knowledge, and a mental discipline that few possess.

2. But ignorance of the facts will not of itself account for opposition to the evolutionary theory, since, as already shown, in most fields of science the overwhelming majority of us unhesitatingly accept facts and theories while remaining in ignorance of the evidence on which they rest. The chief cause of opposition to the theory of evolution is inherited religious belief. The theory is in direct conflict with what most of us were taught in the home and Sunday School as God's revealed truth. From the religious standpoint, therefore, the case for evolution is prejudged; and prejudgment easily passes into prejudice—an attitude which either refuses to consider opposing evidence at all, or else is incapable of giving it a just evaluation.

It is important to understand the exact nature of

the religious belief here spoken of—the belief that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for a certain class of people to accept the theory of evolution.

The Bible is rightly looked upon by practically all Christian people as containing a revelation of the mind and will of God for man's belief and conduct. Described as the word of God, a not unnatural assumption is that the Bible must be absolutely true and right in all its teaching, whether of theology, science, history, or ethics. In other words the Scriptures, by virtue of their divine origin, are to be accepted as infallible and inerrant in every detail.

If this theory of the Bible is correct, then to question anything in the Bible is intellectually presumptuous and morally wrong. It is to set up the finite against the infinite, ignorance against omniscience, man's will against God's will. Men who are guilty of such presumption as this will naturally be looked upon, by adherents of the theory of inerrancy, as dangerous. They will be denounced as enemies of the Bible and of true religion. They will be accused of undermining the foundations.

Wherever this conception of the Bible prevails the rejection of the evolutionary theory is a foregone conclusion. The reasoning is logical. It may be reduced to a syllogism. Stated from the intellectual side: The Bible is the inerrant truth of God; evolution contradicts the Bible; therefore evolution is not true. Stated from the moral and religious side: The Bible in every part reveals the righteous will of God; evolution is at variance with the Bible; therefore evolution is at variance with the will of God. And so it is affirmed that evolution is not only untrue, but atheistic and anti-Christian.

Now the validity of this conclusion depends entirely upon the truth of the major premise: namely, that the Bible throughout is an inerrant revelation of truth and righteousness in every detail of theology, science,

history, and ethics. Since this view of the Bible is fully discussed in chapter IV., it is sufficient to say here that if the Bible had been penned by God, or dictated by Him to an amanuensis, such a conception of it might have some justification. As a matter of fact the Scriptures came in no such way. If they contain a revelation from God, that revelation came through men, and it is conditioned by the character and enlightenment of its human authors. The Bible is both human and divine. It is inspired, but it is not inerrant.

While this theory of inerrancy is giving place to a truer view of inspiration, it is doing so with the slowness that marks all changes in sincere religious conviction, and it is still the greatest obstacle to the acceptance of the theory of evolution.

3. Another reason why many people do not believe, or openly avow a belief, in evolution is fear. This fear may manifest itself in at least two ways:

First, by disposing men to avoid an honest investigation of the subject. They are afraid to investigate. To do so would be like leaving safe and familiar waters and embarking upon seas whose distant shores they cannot discern. They have no desire to "launch out into the deep." They have faith, but it is not of that virile and adventurous kind. One can fully understand and sympathize with this attitude, while at the same time seeing clearly that it is the mark of immature and timid minds, and that if such an attitude were universal, universal stagnation would ensue.

Secondly, fear of consequences may dispose men to conceal, from the public at least, their belief in evolution after such belief has been clearly formed. The president of an educational institution, the pastor of a conservative Church, a professor in a theological seminary or in a denominational college, the editor of a religious newspaper, and others, may conceal their views through fear of losing favor, patronage, position,

or of being adversely criticised. Such fear of consequences is not necessarily ignoble. Every man must judge for himself where caution passes into cowardice.

These seem to be the influences that keep men from accepting the theory of evolution: ignorance of the facts, inherited religious belief, and fear.



## Chapter III.



An Interesting Parallel.

On hearing Galileo's fate, Descartes [1596-1650] burned a book he had written, *On the World*, lest he, too, get into trouble. From that time down to the days of Huxley and John Fiske the struggle has continued, and still continues—the 'Three Hundred Years' War for intellectual freedom in dealing with natural phenomena. It has been a conflict against ignorance, tradition, and vested interests in church and university, with all that preposterous invective and cruel misrepresentation which characterize the fight against new and critical ideas. Those who cried out against scientific discoveries did so in the name of God, of man's dignity, and of holy religion and morality. Finally, however, it has come about that our instruction in the natural sciences is tolerably free; although there are still large bodies of organized religious believers who are hotly opposed to some of the more fundamental findings of biology.—James Harvey Robinson.

### CHAPTER III.

A glance at what was taking place in the two or three generations following the year 1543 will give background to this discussion.

In 1543 Copernicus, a Polish astronomer, published a book entitled, *The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*. The theory advanced in this book was the most revolutionary that had ever entered into the mind of man. It radically changed man's conception of the universe. As far back as human history went, men had believed that the earth was stationary and that the sun and stars, like the moon, revolved around it; and this view was inwrought into the warp and woof of religious faith and doctrine. Copernicus propounded the view that the earth is not stationary, but rotates on its axis, and, with the other planets, revolves around the sun. For the geocentric he substituted the heliocentric theory.

The new view met with such a storm of criticism as has never been accorded any other theory in the history of human thought. It was universally denounced not only as false and absurd, but as unscriptural and atheistic. Of the chorus of denunciation that went up from all parts of Christendom, and that has lasted to our own day, only a few notes can be given:

Martin Luther: "This fool [Copernicus] wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth."

Philipp Melanchthon: "The eyes are witnesses that the heavens revolve in the space of twenty-four hours . . . . It is the part of a good mind to accept the truth as revealed by God and to acquiesce in it."

John Calvin: "Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?"

Father Caccini: "Geometry is of the devil. . . . math-

ematicians should be banished as the authors of all heresies.”

Kasper Peucer: “Absurd and unfit to be introduced into the schools.”

Father Lorini: “Atheistic.”

Cardinal Bellarmine: “His pretended discovery vitiates the whole Christian plan of salvation.”

The Catholic Congregation of the Index: “The doctrine of the double motion of the earth about its axis and about the sun is false, and entirely contrary to Holy Scripture.”

Fromundus: “Sacred Scripture fights against the Copernicans.”

The Catholic Theologians of the Inquisition at Rome: “The first proposition, that the sun is the center and does not revolve about the earth, is foolish, absurd, false in theology, and heretical, because expressly contrary to Holy Scripture; the second proposition, that the earth is not the center but revolves about the sun, is absurd, false in philosophy, and, from a theological point of view at least, opposed to the true faith.”

Dr. John Owen: “Delusive and arbitrary hypothesis, contrary to Scripture.”

John Wesley: The new ideas “tend toward infidelity.”<sup>1</sup>

Such denunciation ought not to cause the least surprise. The new theory seemed to outrage common sense, for could not one see the sun and stars rise and set? It looked absurd, for would not people drop off the earth if it rotated?<sup>2</sup> And it was opposed to Scripture, for the Bible everywhere assumes the geocentric theory. There is not a word in it that suggests the Copernican view. Yet Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler were right. They, and a few others, were the men who knew the facts, and in spite of ignorance and

<sup>1</sup> These quotations are taken from *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 2 vols., by Andrew D. White, LL.D., late President and Professor of History at Cornell University. D. Appleton & Co., 1896. See vol. I., chap. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The law of gravitation was not announced by Newton until 1686.



religious prejudice and fear the world had to come to their view.

Yet such is the strength and persistence of religious belief that for many generations the Churches opposed the new theory. Dr. White says: "So important was it thought to have 'sound learning' guarded and 'safe science' taught, that in many of the universities, as late as the end of the seventeenth century,<sup>1</sup> professors were forced to take an oath not to hold the 'Pythagorean'—that is, the Copernican—idea as to the movement of the heavenly bodies. As the contest went on, professors were forbidden to make known to students the facts revealed by the telescope. Special orders to this effect were issued by the ecclesiastical authorities to the universities and colleges of Pisa, Innsbruck, Louvain, Douay, Salamanca, and others. During generations we find the authorities of these universities boasting that those godless doctrines were kept away from their students."<sup>2</sup>

In 1873 a Lutheran teacher published in St. Louis a book in which he attacked the whole system of modern astronomy. He says: "Let no one understand me as inquiring first where truth is to be found—in the Bible or with the astronomers. No; I know that before-hand—that my God never lies, never makes a mistake; out of his mouth comes only truth."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. William E. Barton tells us that when he was teaching in the mountains of Kentucky in 1881, a Baptist minister took his son out of school because the boy was there taught that the earth is round. The father explained that he could not permit his boy "to be converted to infidelity."<sup>4</sup>

And today, in Zion, Illinois, is a religious organi-

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<sup>1</sup> That is, as late as 1700, more than a century and a half after the publication of Copernicus' book.

<sup>2</sup> *The Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. 1., p. 128.

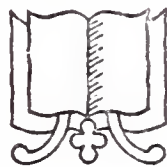
<sup>3</sup> *The Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. 1, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln*, by William E. Barton, pp. 64, 65. Geo. H. Doran Co. 1920.

zation, the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church, whose members hold to the geocentric theory. Their leader, Wilbur Glenn Voliva, sets forth this view in several articles in the *Theocrat* under the caption: "Which Will You Accept? the Bible, the Inspired Word of God, or the Infidel Theories of Modern Astronomy?" So that 380 years after Copernicus published his book, there are still men and women whose religious belief—namely, that the Bible is infallible and inerrant in every detail—holds them to the geocentric theory. It should not occasion surprise, therefore, that, 64 years after the publication of the *Origin of Species*, the theory of evolution is still rejected because it conflicts with religious conviction. The theories associated with the names of Copernicus and Darwin have revolutionized human thought, and the adjustment of religious views, supposed to have come directly from God, to the new outlook has not been easy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.



## Chapter IV.

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Evolution Compatible With Presbyterianism.

Presbyterianism is a system for a free people that love a regulated, a self-regulating freedom; for a people independent, yet patient, considerate, trusting much to the processes of discussion and consultation, and more to the promised aid of a much-forgiving and a watchful Lord. It is a system for strong Churches—Churches that are not afraid to let their matters see the light of day—to let their weakest parts and their worst defects be canvassed before all men that they may be mended. It is a system for believing Churches that are not ashamed or afraid to cherish a high ideal and to speak of lofty aims and to work for long and far results, amid all the discouragements arising from sin and folly in their own ranks and around them. It is a system for catholic Christians who wish not merely to cherish private idiosyncrasies, but to feel themselves identified with the common cause while they cleave directly to Him whose cause it is.—Robert Rainy.

## CHAPTER IV.

The second general charge brought against the theory of evolution is that it is anti-Christian and tends to atheism. We have seen that these things were said of the Copernican theory. They were also said of the theory of gravitation and of the science of geology. Is the charge any more valid against evolution than it was against these?

There can be little doubt that the Church itself, because of the traditionalism of its priesthood and ministry, is responsible for much indifference and skepticism on the part of intelligent men—men who, by early training and by inclination, are sincerely religious. Such men grow up to find theological views that do violence to reason and heart and conscience proclaimed as an essential part of the religion of Christ; and because these men are skeptical of the former, they are suspected and often denounced as being hostile to the latter. If the Copernican theory, the theory of gravitation, and the science of geology made men skeptical, who was to blame—the scientists who were teaching truth, or the Church which was opposing it? And if the theory of evolution, now held by practically all scientists, is alienating men from the Church, it is certainly a fair question to ask: Who is responsible?

Since this pamphlet is intended chiefly for Presbyterians it will be a sufficient answer to the charges mentioned above to show that some of the ablest and most widely known of Presbyterian ministers have accepted evolution, in whole or in part, and have found in it nothing incompatible with Presbyterianism; and it may safely be said that if representative Presbyterian ministers find nothing in evolution that is incompatible with Presbyterianism, nothing will be found in it that is inconsistent with Christianity—a very much simpler thing. If evolution is not anti-Presbyterian, it is clearly not anti-Christian.

As already stated, however, there is one view with which neither the heliocentric nor the evolutionary theory is compatible; and that is, the theory of the verbal inerrancy of the Bible. While this theory is not a part of the Presbyterian creed, much less of the Christian religion, yet since it is at the bottom of nine-tenths of all opposition to the theory of evolution, I shall give on it, as well as on evolution, the views of the men quoted.

1. One of the most noted leaders of Scotch Presbyterianism was Dr. Robert Rainy (1826-1906). Dr. Rainy was professor of Church History in New College, Edinburgh, from 1862 to 1900, and Principal of that institution from 1874 till his death.<sup>1</sup> He was three times elected moderator of the General Assembly of his Church. In a conversation in which Lord Roseberry, A. J. Balfour, and other noted Scotchmen were mentioned, Mr. Gladstone said of Principal Rainy, "He is unquestionably the greatest of living Scotsmen." Dr. Simpson, the biographer of Dr. Rainy, says: "It is no exaggeration to say that the Scottish Church has never had an ecclesiastical leader of greater spiritual authority than Principal Rainy came to have."<sup>2</sup>

When Dr. Rainy was inducted into office as Principal of New College in 1874, he took as the subject of his inaugural address *Evolution and Theology*. That he found nothing in evolution incompatible with Christianity as interpreted by Presbyterians is clear from the following paragraph:—

"The new Principal delivered his inaugural address in October, 1874. Its subject was *Evolution and Theology*, and the lecture attracted considerable attention. The religious mind of the day was disturbed about Darwinism and apprehensive lest it should affect the foundations of faith; and that a man of Dr. Rainy's known piety and orthodoxy should, from the Principal's chair

<sup>1</sup> New College, Edinburgh, and the United Free Church colleges in Glasgow and Aberdeen are what in this country we call theological seminaries.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Principal Rainy*, by P. Carnegie Simpson, D.D., vol. II., p. 163, vol. 1, p. 422. Hodder and Stoughton. 1909.

of the New College, frankly accept the legitimacy of the application of evolution even to man's descent and find it a point on which the theologian 'may be perfectly at ease' reassured many minds. That theology can maintain a theistic doctrine of the origin of the universe and a spiritual doctrine of man along with a readiness to let science prove what it can about evolution goes almost without saying in intelligent religious circles today; it was well worth saying from the chief academic seat of the Free Church in 1874."<sup>1</sup>

That was only fifteen years after the publication of the *Origin of the Species*.

From the following extract may be gathered Dr. Rainy's attitude towards the theory of the verbal inerrancy of the Bible:—

"A process [heresy charge] against either Dr. Dods or Dr. Bruce was refused [in 1890],<sup>2</sup> and thus the Church affirmed the permissibility of a view which did not claim for the Bible that verbal inerrancy which had hitherto been almost universally bound up with the doctrine of Inspiration. Principal Rainy supported the motion above indicated. . . .

"The general question of the existence in the Biblical record of discrepancies in non-essential details seemed to evoke little interest in his mind. Around him men of the older orthodox school were thundering that the admission of this destroyed a very basis of faith. Dr. Rainy said 'he regarded all these questions about minor difficulties as in a large degree despicable questions, and he refused to concern himself very much as to how they were to be solved.' Personally he held, or was inclined 'to hold,' though he did it 'under difficulties,' and 'he did not feel the difficulties in holding it decreasing,' that they might find, after all, that God had preserved the Scriptures, even in minor matters, from real error. But he refused out and out to identify that view with inspiration itself, and to cast out any man who took another view. He put this thus:—

"Suppose a student were to say to him: "I take the Word of God as my rule of faith and life. I hear the voice of God everywhere in it. I find it assuring me on this point and on that what my Father will have me to be and to do. But, on the whole

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. 1, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Marcus Dods (1834-1909) and Dr. A. B. Bruce (1831-1899) had disavowed belief in the theory of the inerrancy of Scripture. Both were distinguished scholars and writers. Dr. Dods held the chair of New Testament Exegesis in New College, Edinburgh, succeeding Dr. Rainy as Principal in 1907. Dr. Bruce was Professor of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis in the Free Church College, Glasgow, from 1875 till his death.

looking to what the Scripture seems to me to claim for itself and looking to all the facts, I think it is fairer and truer to say that these human incidents of inaccuracy in smaller things that are characteristic just of human history have not in all cases been averted more than other human incidents or conditions of human writings"—if they asked him to say to that student, "You are not in a condition to sign the Confession of Faith as a minister of the Free Church," he would not do it. . . . He thought God was calling them to go into council on this matter, and was not calling them to turn one another out of doors in connection with it.'

"The one question in this matter which did seem to him worthy of serious answer was when men asked where we are to stop if inerrances [*errancies* or *inaccuracies* was obviously intended here] are once admitted? On this question—the question where the line is to be drawn—Principal Rainy said thus:—

"'God's way was not always to give them mathematical lines. God had not given them clear mathematical lines about the canon, and yet they found they had surmounted that, and there was no real difficulty about the canon. God had not given them mathematical lines about the text, and that was a great matter of difficulty once, but they had surmounted it and there was no real difficulty about the text. God had not given them a mathematical line about interpretation, and yet honest students of Scripture were agreed about interpretation—he meant in the main and essential matters.'<sup>1</sup>

"And in the same way, Dr. Rainy indicated, it might and would be that, even if God had not given mathematical lines in the details of the narrative, still 'the Bible would prove itself a sufficient guide to honest inquirers.'<sup>2</sup>

2. Few Presbyterians of recent years are more widely known than Henry Drummond (1851-1897); but it is not generally known that he was a regularly ordained Presbyterian minister. After four years at Edinburgh University, Drummond spent four years in New College, Edinburgh, preparing for the ministry. In 1878 he was ordained an elder in the Church of which Dr. Marcus Dods was pastor—a scholar by whom Drummond was deeply influenced. In 1884 he was elected by the General Assembly to the chair of Natural Science in the Free Church College, Glasgow, and in the same year was ordained to the ministry by

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. II., pp. 112-114.



Glasgow Presbytery. So that his status was that of a professor of theology.

Probably no man ever lived who more beautifully harmonized in his life the spirit of Christ and the spirit of science—the two most powerful and beneficent influences in our modern world. On all who knew Mr. Drummond intimately he made the impression as of a rare spirit in whom love and truth were incarnate.

Mr. Moody, with whose work as evangelist Mr. Drummond was for a time associated, said of him: "No words of mine can better describe his life or character than those in which he has presented to us *The Greatest Thing in the World*. Some men take an occasional journey into the thirteenth of First Corinthians, but Henry Drummond was a man who lived there constantly, appropriating its blessings and exemplifying its teachings. As you read what he terms the analysis of love, you find that all its ingredients were interwoven into his daily life, making him one of the most lovable men I have ever known. Was it courtesy you looked for, he was a perfect gentleman. Was it kindness, he was always preferring another. Was it humility, he was simple and not courting favour. It could be said of him truthfully, as it was said of the early apostles, "that men took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus." Nor was this love and kindness only shown to those who were close friends. His face was an index to his inner life. It was genial and kind, and made him, like his Master, a favourite with children. . . . Never have I known a man who, in my opinion, lived nearer the Master or sought to do His will more fully. . . . No man has ever been with me for any length of time that I did not see something that was unlike Christ, and I often see it in myself, but not in Henry Drummond. All the time we were together he was a Christlike man and often a rebuke to me." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Henry Drummond*, by George Adam Smith, p. 9. Geo. H. Doran Co. 1898.

Sir Archibald Geikie, the geologist, knew Mr. Drummond intimately as pupil and companion and wrote of him: "I have never met with a man in whom transparent integrity, high moral purpose, sweetness of disposition and exuberant helpfulness were more happily combined with wide culture, poetic imagination, and scientific sympathies than they were in Henry Drummond. Most deeply do I grieve over his early death."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Carnegie Simpson says: "It is hopeless to convey to those who did not know him any just impression of his unstained and yet so perfectly natural and human purity and goodness. When he died, a light went out in the lives of his friends."<sup>2</sup>

That Mr. Drummond was an evolutionist is, of course, well known. When he became professor of Natural Science in New College (1884), the subject of his inaugural address was *The Contribution of Science to Christianity*. This contribution he held to be two-fold—the Scientific Method and the Doctrine of Evolution. Ten years later (1894) he expressed his views on evolution more fully in his book, *The Ascent of Man*.

Not for Mr. Drummond did evolution drive God from the universe, or put Him to sleep for millions of years:—

"There are reverent minds who ceaselessly scan the fields of Nature and the books of Science in search of gaps—gaps which they will fill up with God. As if God lived in gaps! What view of Nature or of Truth is theirs whose interest in Science is not in what it can explain, but in what it cannot, whose quest is ignorance, not knowledge, whose daily dread is that the cloud may lift, and who, as darkness melts from this field or from that, begin to tremble for the place of His abode? What needs altering in such finely jealous souls is at once their view of Nature and of God. Nature is God's writing, and can only tell the truth; God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Henry Drummond*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. II., p. 170.

“If by the accumulation of irresistible evidence we are driven—may one not say permitted—to accept Evolution as God’s method in creation, it is a mistaken policy to glory in what it cannot account for. The reason why men grudge to Evolution each of its fresh claims to show how things have been made is the groundless fear that if we discover how they are made we minimize their divinity. When things are known, that is to say, we conceive them as natural, on Man’s level; when they are unknown, we call them divine—as if our ignorance of a thing were the stamp of its divinity. If God is only to be left to the gaps in our knowledge, where shall we be when these gaps are filled up? And if they are never to be filled up, is God only to be found in the disorders of the world? Those who yield to the temptation to reserve a point here and there for special divine interposition are apt to forget that this virtually excludes God from the rest of the process. If God appears periodically, he disappears periodically. If he comes upon the scene at special crises he is absent from the scene in the intervals. Whether is all-God or occasional-God the nobler theory? Positively, the idea of an immanent God, which is the God of evolution, is infinitely grander than the occasional wonder-worker who is the God of an old theology.”<sup>1</sup>

To Mr. Drummond evolution, besides possessing beauty and grandeur as a theory, gave us a better theology and a clearer Bible:—

“It is needless at this time of day to point out the surpassing grandeur of the new conception. How it has filled the Christian imagination and kindled to enthusiasm the soberest scientific minds, is known to all. . . . The doctrine of evolution fills a gap at the very beginning of our religion, and no one who looks now at the transcendent spectacle of the world’s past, as disclosed by science, will deny that it has filled it worthily. Yet, after all, its beauty is not the only part of its contribution to Christianity. Scientific theology *required* a new view, though it did not require it to come in so magnificent a form. What it wanted was a credible presentation, in view especially of astronomy, geology, and biology. These had made the former theory simply untenable. And science has supplied theology with a theory which the intellect can accept and which for the devout mind leaves everything more worthy of worship than before. . . .

“The supreme contribution of Evolution to Religion is that it has given it a clearer Bible. . . . It is not going too far to say that there are many things in the Bible which are hard to reconcile

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ascent of Man*, by Henry Drummond, LL.D., F.R.S.E., F. G. S., pp. 333 and 334. James Pott & Co. 1894.

with our ideas of a just and good God. This is only expressing what even the most devout and simple minds constantly feel, and feel to be sorely perplexing, in reading especially the Old Testament. But these difficulties arise simply from an old-fashioned or unscientific view of what the Bible is, and are similar to the difficulties found in nature when interpreted either without the aid of science, or with the science of many centuries ago. . . .

"The new Bible is a book whose parts, though not of unequal value, are seen to be of different kinds of value; where the casual is distinguished from the essential, the local from the universal, the subordinate from the primal end. This Bible is not a book which has been made; it has grown. Hence it is no longer a mere word-book, nor a compendium of doctrines, but a nursery of growing truths. It is not an even plane of proof text without proportion or emphasis, or light and shade; but a revelation varied as nature, with the Divine in its hidden parts, in its spirit, its tendencies, its obscurities, and its omissions. Like nature it has successive strata, and valley and hilltop, and mist and atmosphere, and rivers which are flowing still, and here and there a place which is desert, and fossils too, whose crude forms are the stepping-stones to higher things. It is a record of inspired deeds as well as of inspired words, an ascending series of inspired facts in a matrix of human history. . . .

"The Bible of our infancy was not an apologist's Bible. There are things in the Old Testament cast in his teeth by skeptics, to which he [the apologist] has simply no answer. These are the things, the miserable things, the masses have laid hold of. They are the stock-in-trade to-day of the free-thought platform, and the secularist pamphleteer. And, surprising as it is, there are not a few honest seekers who are made timid and suspicious, not a few on the outskirts of Christianity who are kept from coming further in, by the half-truths which a new exegesis, a reconsideration of the historic setting, and a clearer view of the moral purposes of God, would change from barriers into bulwarks of the faith. Such a Bible scientific theology is giving us, and it cannot be proclaimed to the mass of the people too soon."<sup>1</sup>

With regard especially to the conflict between Genesis and science, his biographer says of Mr. Drummond: "On the one side he accepted Mr. Huxley's statement that it is impossible to harmonize Genesis and science; on the other side, he denied that the contradiction

<sup>1</sup> These extracts are from Drummond's inaugural address, *The Contribution of Science to Christianity*, printed in *The New Evangelisms* by Henry Drummond, pp. 234, 241, 247, 250. Dodd, Mead & Co. 1899.

between them was fatal to the belief that Genesis contains 'a revelation of truth from God.'"<sup>1</sup>

From the extracts given it is plain that while Mr. Drummond accepted the Bible as inspired, he rejected the theory of verbal inerrancy. In a brief note he refers to verbal inspiration as a "fundamental mistake," says it prevents men from thinking, and in the same connection speaks of "the paralyzing and stunting effect of anything which interferes with the legitimate exercise of human faculty."<sup>2</sup>

For these and other views Mr. Drummond was of course adversely criticized. Writing from S. Framingham, Mass., to Lady Aberdeen, he said: "There is much heat here, but no light. The Pharisees are down on one of course, but the Barbarians show me no little kindness." His biographer says: "The story goes that a deputation of the usual adherents of the Northfield Conference waited on Mr. Moody and urged him not to allow Drummond to speak. Mr. Moody asked a day to think over the matter; and when the deputation returned, informed them that he had 'laid it before the Lord, and the Lord had shown him that Drummond was a better man than himself; so he was to go on!' This, if true," continues Dr. Smith, "was like the man who penned the tribute to Drummond, given in the first chapter of this volume, and who once said to the writer, 'There's nothing I ever read of Henry Drummond's, or heard him say, that I didn't agree with.'"<sup>3</sup>

To many young men and women in our schools and colleges who are feeling their way from the old to the new, perhaps without sympathetic guidance or companionship, the following paragraphs from Dr. Smith's *Life of Henry Drummond* (pp. 14 and 262) may prove encouraging:—

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<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Henry Drummond*, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Henry Drummond*, p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> *The Life of Henry Drummond*, pp. 373, 452.

“Here was a young man trained in an evangelical family, and in the school of the older orthodoxy, who consecrated his youth to the service of Christ, and never all his life lost his faith in Christ as his Lord and Saviour, or in Christ’s Divinity, or in the power of His Atonement, but who grew away from many of the doctrines which, when he was young, were still regarded by the Churches as equally well assured and indispensable to the creed of a Christian: such as, for instance, belief in the literal inspiration and equal divinity of all parts of the Bible.”

“From all this it is apparent how far Drummond had travelled from the positions of the older orthodoxy. These positions had been the intellectual basis of the Christian faith for centuries. To question them seemed to many to be treason; to abandon them, madness. But Drummond was forced from them by his study of facts in the departments of natural science and of Biblical criticism and Biblical theology. And upon the new positions to which he was led he has evidently found a basis for his faith more stable than ever the older was imagined to be, richer mines of Christian experience and truth, better vantage grounds for preaching the gospel of Christ, and loftier summits, with infinitely wider prospects of the power of God and of the destiny of man.”

3. In the United Free Church College, Glasgow, Dr. James Orr (1844-1913) held the chair of Apologetics and Systematic Theology from 1901 till his death. He was a man of wide range of learning and a prolific writer. Dr. Orr was regarded in Scotland and in this country as the champion of conservative views. Allusions to this attitude are found in the following appreciation of him by his colleague, Dr. James Denney:—

“The news of Dr. Orr’s death will be heard with true sorrow far beyond the limits of his own church and country. He was not only the distinguished representative of an attitude and of opinions in religion which are dear to many: he had in an unusual degree the power of commanding the confidence and affection of those whom he represented. There was nothing to overcome in approaching him. He appealed to men with the weight of a massive and simple nature intellectually powerful and self-reliant, spiritually humble and sincere, and, above all, transparently

disinterested. When he took a side decisively in controversy, it was not because it was the safe side or because there was anything to be made by it. . . . He had little patience with the thinkers—or the enemies of thinking—who divide the world and the mind between science and religion, and who tell us that it need not or does not make any difference to our religious faith though we change our minds on questions of physical science, of philosophy, or of history. The mind for him was just the instrument for the unification of all the truth within our reach, and a difference at any point made a difference all through. . . . He had no cheap and easy way of evading or dismissing difficulties. He had studied Darwin and Weismann, he had an expert's acquaintance with criticism, both in the Old Testament and the New, he was widely read in the literature of comparative religion; and when he discussed the difference which was made to the Christian view of God and the world by conclusions drawn in any of these fields, it was with a knowledge which commanded the respect even of those whom he failed to convince."<sup>1</sup>

Because of Dr. Orr's conservatism, and because of the esteem in which he was held throughout the Southern Presbyterian Church, it will be interesting to learn his views on evolution and verbal inerrancy.<sup>2</sup>

✓ Concerning evolution Dr. Orr writes: "On the general hypothesis of evolution, as applied to the organic world, I have nothing to say, except that, within certain limits, it seems to me extremely probable, and supported by a large body of evidence. This, however, only refers to the fact of a genetic relationship of some kind between the different species of plants and animals, and does not affect the means by which this development may be supposed to be brought

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Work*, Oct. 18, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> At the meeting of the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Ga., in 1909, Dr. Orr delivered one of the addresses celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of Calvin.

about.”<sup>1</sup> And in one of his last books, he says: “The day may be regarded as past where such a conception as evolution was thought to conflict with, or supersede, the belief in ends, plan, purpose, intelligent ordering, and providential guidance, in creation. These ideas not simply stand secure; they have received firmer grounding in the best thought of evolutionary science itself.”<sup>2</sup>

But while accepting the evolutionary theory in general, Dr. Orr did not believe it to be applicable to man. He says: “I claim, then, that so far as the evidence of science goes, the Bible doctrine of a pure beginning of the race is not overturned. I do not enter into the question of how we are to interpret the third chapter of Genesis,—whether as history or allegory or myth, or, most probable of all, as old tradition clothed in oriental allegorical dress,—but the truth embodied in that narrative, viz., the fall of man from an original state of purity, I take to be vital to the Christian view.”<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, we must beware, even while holding to the Biblical account, of putting into the original state of man more than the narrative warrants.”<sup>4</sup> More directly: “Evolution, as I said earlier, is not Darwinism, and the Darwinian idea of the production of man by slow gradations from lower ape-like forms is one which I think is being discredited on scientific grounds.”<sup>5</sup>

On the subject of revelation and inspiration, the distinction between which he considers to be very important, Dr. Orr has written an informing volume. The following excerpts, giving Dr. Orr’s view of the part that inspiration plays in the Biblical record of *historic, prehistoric, and scientific* material, have a direct bearing on the theory of inerrancy:—

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 99. Charles Scribner’s Sons. 1897.

<sup>2</sup> *Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 42. Scribner’s Sons. 1910

<sup>3</sup> If man is descended from the lower animals, he is, so far as morality is concerned, descended from “an original state of purity.”

<sup>4</sup> *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C.



"It is not uncommon to hear inspiration spoken of as if it rendered the subject of it superior to ordinary sources of information, or at least was at hand to supply supernaturally all gaps or deficiencies in that information. The records of the Bible have only to be studied as they lie before us to show that this is an entire mistake. . . .

"1. In *historical* matters it is evident that inspiration is dependent for its knowledge of facts on the ordinary channels of information—on older documents, on oral tradition, on public registers, on genealogical lists, etc. No sober-minded defender of inspiration would now think of denying this proposition. One has only to look into the Biblical books to discover the abundant proof of it. . . .

"2. This principle applies not only to historic, but to *pre-historic* times, where written records altogether fail. . . . The example in Scripture is the early chapters of Genesis. The theory at present prevailing, that these chapters—the story of creation and paradise, antediluvian lists, flood, etc.—are based on Babylonian myths, appropriated and purified by the spirit of revelation in Israel, falls below the mark of dignity in the narratives. It is truer to regard them as the embodiments of the earliest and most precious traditions of the race, in the purer form in which they descended through the ancestors of the Hebrew people. They may, however, be ancient, and yet bear traces of transmission in a more or less allegorical or symbolical form. Few, e. g., will be disposed to take literally the account of the making of Eve out of the rib taken from Adam's side while he slept. The story of the Fall, again, may well be the account of an actual historical catastrophe in the commencement of the race, in its cradle in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates. Truths of eternal moment may be enshrined, it is believed are, in its simple narrative. Yet, with many of the most devout expounders of the story, we can hardly err in seeing symbolical elements, or an allegorical dress, in the features of the serpent, the trees, the cherubim. The cherubim, throughout the Scripture, are *ideal figures*. While, again, remarkable longevity may have been, and probably was, characteristic of the oldest race of men,<sup>1</sup> there is, even in the most conservative circles, a growing consensus of opinion that the early genealogies cannot be interpreted with modern literality—that chronology demands an extensive lengthening of the pre-Abrahamic period, and that the names given in the lists stand rather for representatives of tribes, or clans, or for heads of families, than for individuals. . . .

<sup>1</sup> It probably was not. "With regard to the human race, there seems to be almost no doubt that the average duration of life has increased with civilization." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, article "Longevity").

“3. This principle applies, finally, to the relations of inspiration to *scientific* knowledge. The Bible is not, nor was ever intended to be, an anticipative text-book of science. This is evident on the face of it. Where natural phenomena are described, it is as they appear to the natural observer. There is no pretence of acquaintance with our modern astronomy, geology, physics, or biology; or with modern scientific classifications of plants and animals. The standpoint is religious—the creation of the world by God, its dependence on Him, His universal activity in it and providence over it. These conceptions stand on a distinct footing from details of science.”<sup>1</sup>

More specifically as to the theory of inerrancy, Dr. Orr says:—

“The doctrine of inspiration grows out of that of revelation, and can only be made intelligible through the latter. The older method was to prove first the inspiration (by historical evidence, miracles, claims of writers), then through that establish the revelation. This view still finds an echo in the note sometimes heard—‘If the inspiration of the Bible (commonly some theory of inspiration) be given up, what have we left to hold by?’ It is urged, e. g., that unless we can demonstrate what is called the ‘inerrancy’ of the Biblical record, down even to its minutest details, the whole edifice of belief in revealed religion falls to the ground. This, on the face of it, is a most suicidal position for any defender of revelation to take up. It is certainly a much easier matter to prove the reality of a divine revelation in the history of Israel, or in Christ, than it is to prove the inerrant inspiration of every part of the record through which that revelation has come to us.”<sup>2</sup> . . .

“‘Verbal inspiration,’ is apt to suggest a mechanical theory of inspiration, akin to dictation, which all intelligent upholders of inspiration now agree in repudiating. In the result it may be

<sup>1</sup> *Revelation and Inspiration*, pp. 163, 164, 165, 166, 168.

<sup>2</sup> Of the four advances in modern thought on the whole subject of the inspiration of the Bible, Dr. Orr says: “Probably the principal advance in the modern handling of this subject is in the attempts at the more accurate discrimination of the related ideas of *revelation* and *inspiration* themselves. So long as revelation was directly identified with Scripture, such discrimination was impossible; now nearly all writers recognize a distinction between the two ideas.” (p. 23). For example, Dr. Orr would not look upon such parts of the Bible as the first chapters of First Chronicles as in any sense a revelation from God, or as being inspired. This was the view held by Dr. Rainy. “Speaking of inspiration or the persuasion that the Bible is ‘no mere work of man,’ he says this is not to be maintained as recognizable in ‘every separate fragment of Scripture;’ but, he adds: ‘It is Scripture taken together, and as it hangs together and is of a piece, of which this is said.’” (*Life*, vol. I., p. 345).

held to imply a literality in narratives, quotations or reports of discourses, which the facts, as we know them, do not warrant. . . .

“Very commonly it is urged by upholders of this doctrine that ‘inerrancy’ in every minute particular is involved in the very idea of a book given by inspiration of God. This might be held to be true on a theory of verbal dictation, but it can scarcely be maintained on a just view of the actual historical genesis of the Bible. One may plead, indeed, for ‘a supernatural providential guidance’ which has for its aim to exclude all, even the least, error or discrepancy in statement, even such as may inhere in the sources from which the information is obtained, or may arise from corruption of anterior documents. But this is a violent assumption which there is nothing in the Bible really to support. It is perilous, therefore, to seek to pin down faith to it as a matter of vital moment. Inspiration, in sanctioning the incorporation of an old genealogy, or of an historic document in some respects defective, no more makes itself responsible for those defects than it does for the speeches of Job’s friends in the Book of Job, or for the sentiments of many parts of the Book of Ecclesiastes, or for the imperfect translation of Old Testament passages in quotations from the Septuagint.”<sup>1</sup>

4. Few theologians in the Presbyterian Church of the past generation have been more influential than Dr. James Denney (1856-1917). Dr. Denney was professor of New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology, in the United Free Church College, Glasgow, after 1897, and later was made Principal of that institution. His writings are marked by a rare combination of learning, of spiritual insight, and of intellectual strength and candor.

Under the caption, *Loss of a Great Scotch Leader*, the *Continent* (Presbyterian), June 21, 1917, says: “The cable brings news from Scotland of the death of Dr. James Denney, principal of the United Free Church Theological school in Glasgow. This will be a very depressing loss to Scotch Presbyterianism, for Dr. Denney held a leadership and prestige among the Scotch people excelled by no other clergyman except the venerable Dr. Alexander Whyte, the principal of New College in Edinburgh.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Revelation and Inspiration*, pp. 197, 210, 213.

The following editorial, quoted in part, appeared in the *Christian Work*, July 7, 1917: "The death of Principal James Denney, D. D., of the United Free Church College, Glasgow, at the age of sixty-one, is a painful shock to all who found his great literary output a source of stimulating, mental enrichment. . . . From his youth Dr. Denney was a great reader, and on entering the Free Church College astonished everybody by the range of his knowledge. . . . He was a sane and open-minded champion of essential orthodoxy, and believed that it could be commended to the reasonable modern mind. . . . He was evangelical to the core, and fervently evangelistic in his insistence on the necessity of power rather than eloquence and smartness in preaching. His influence on his students was intense and deep. As a theologian, his mental poise and tolerance towards schools of thought from which he radically differed made him somewhat suspect to the 'hard shell' evangelicals. He hated shallow generalizations and hop-skip-and-jump methods of avoiding patient working to established conclusions. He wanted to be sure that he knew what he knew—most of all that he was sure of Christ. . . . Less and less did he put his trust in creedal and confessional attempts to limit Christ to the mental outlook of a school or an age. He even proposed that creed subscription should be abandoned in favor of a comprehensive and Scriptural confession of faith, which he suggested might be, 'I believe in God through Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord and Savior.' His view was that a man's or a Church's Christology was a thing apart from a vital personal faith, and, if the faith were real, the theological interpretation of it might be infinitely variable."

There can be no question, therefore, of Dr. Denney's scholarship and ability, of his thorough evangelicalism, or of the confidence reposed in him by his Church—

the United Free Church of Scotland. In fact he was held in the highest esteem by Presbyterians everywhere.

Now what was Dr. Denney's view of evolution? This sentence by way of introduction: "If religious people had always done their part in the study of the works of God, that sincere and reverent study which their Divine origin demands; and if scientific people had always remembered that every separate truth becomes false when it is cut off from relation to truth as a whole—that is, to the mind of God—we might have been spared much misunderstanding and strife, and a more noble and intelligent praise would have gone up to God from the hearts of all His children."<sup>1</sup>

Concerning evolution Dr. Denney writes: "The Darwinian theory of the origin of species—probably the most immediately and widely influential theory ever introduced to human intelligence—has the law of heredity, and of accumulation by heredity, as one of its essential levers; and through it that law has taken possession of the common mind as it had never done before."<sup>2</sup>

While accepting the evolutionary theory Dr. Denney felt it important, as everyone should, to recognize the absolute distinction and supremacy of man as a moral, intelligent, and creative spirit. In the first sentence of the following quotation the emphasis is on *merely*:—

"Is man merely a piece of nature? Is he merely the last term in an ascending series of animals, the consumation or crown of the natural process? No one who has really reflected would answer in the affirmative. It is true that all forms of life are akin; it is true that we are blood relations of everything that breathes; it is true that there is only one chemistry, one physiology, for the interpretation of life in every degree from the amphioxus up to man. But if this is a humbling and perhaps a depressing truth—if it casts the shadow of physical necessity over what we are accustomed to regard as the realm of human freedom—let us consider on the other hand that the only chemist, the only physiologist, the only interpreter of nature in her one and pervasive

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<sup>1</sup> *The Way Everlasting*, by James Denney, D.D., p. 84. Hodder & Stoughton. 1911

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in Theology*, p. 87. Hodder & Stoughton. 1895.

life is man. Man is not only a part of nature, he confronts nature as nothing which is only a part of it could do. He confronts it and includes it at the same time. He is not only the crown of nature, he is in some sense its king. It is his territory, his inheritance. He confronts it with a sovereign self-consciousness. He is not only, like other living creatures, a subject which science studies; unlike other living creatures he is the creator of the very science by which this study is carried on. Though he lives in time, he is not time's fool; a relation to God, to eternal truth, to inviolable duty, to a free calling in which nature is subject to him, is just as much a part or characteristic of his being as his kinship to nature as a whole, and the rooting of his life in the physical system around him. This is not only recognized in every sound philosophy: it stands on the first page of the Bible as part of its conception of the true constitution of man. It is what the Bible means when it tells us that *God created man in His own image, and gave him dominion over all the earth.*"<sup>1</sup>

The theory of evolution necessitates a change of view concerning the historical origin of sin; and this may raise questions as to the essential nature of sin, man's moral accountability, and his need of atonement. On these questions Dr. Denney has written with remarkable insight, penetrating through Oriental speech and figure to the very heart and truth of the matter:—

"It is no more necessary in connection with the Atonement than in any other connection that we should have a doctrine of the origin of sin. We do not know its origin, we only know that it is here. We cannot observe the genesis of the bad conscience any more than we can observe the genesis of consciousness in general. We see that consciousness does stand in relief against the background of natural life; but though we believe that, as it exists in us, it has emerged from that background, we cannot see it emerge; it is an ultimate fact, and is assumed in all that we can ever regard as its physical antecedents and presuppositions. In the same way, the moral consciousness is an ultimate fact, and irreducible. The physical theory of evolution must not be allowed

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<sup>1</sup> *The Way Everlasting*, p. 89. That there are many who think that *in the image of God* has reference to bodily likeness, and is therefore an argument against evolution, testifies to a singular survival of primitive anthropomorphism. God has no body. If any animal, from a tyrannosaurus to a tadpole, had the spiritual endowment of man, it would reflect *the image of God* just as truly as man does. "We may be very clear," says Dr. Orr, "that by the image of God is not to be understood anything relating to man's *bodily form*." (*Sidelights on Christian Doctrine*, p. 79. See also Bishop Ryle on Genesis 1:26 in the *Cambridge Bible*).

to mislead us here, and in particular it must not be allowed to discredit the conception of moral responsibility for sin which is embodied in the story of the Fall.<sup>1</sup> Each of us individually has risen into moral life from a mode of being which was purely natural; in other words, each of us, individually, has been a subject of evolution; but each of us also has fallen—fallen, presumably, in ways determined by his natural constitution, yet certainly, as conscience assures us, in ways for which we are morally answerable, and to which, in the moral constitution of the world, consequences attach which we must recognize as our due. They are not only results of our action, but results which that action has merited, and there is no moral hope for us unless we accept them as such. Now what is true of any, or rather of all, of us, without compromise of the moral consciousness, may be true of the race, or of the first man, if there was a first man. Evolution and a Fall cannot be inconsistent, for both enter into every moral experience of which we know anything; and no opinion we hold about the origin of sin can make it anything else than it is in conscience. Of course when one tries to interpret sin outside of conscience, as though it were purely physical, and did not have its being in personality, consciousness, and will, it disappears; and the laborious sophistries of such interpretations must be left to themselves. The point for us is that no matter how sin originated, in the moral consciousness in which it has its being it is recognized as a derangement of the vital relations of man, a violation of that universal order outside of which he has no true good.”<sup>2</sup>

The theory of verbal inerrancy Dr. Denney rejected. The circumstances attending his public disavowal of it as related by Simpson in his *Life of Principal Rainy* are interesting:—

“In her decision in this case [the case of Dr. Dods and Dr. Bruce] the orthodox and evangelical Free Church of Scotland was taking a notable step in theological progress. She was not so much changing as sifting the doctrine of inspiration. It is true that the standards of the Free Church did not impose a doctrine of verbal inerrancy. The Confession of Faith, indeed, carefully avoids committing itself to any theory of the mode or degree of inspiration. But unquestionably, the prevalent and, till the days of Robertson Smith,<sup>3</sup> one might almost say the universal view of that subject

<sup>1</sup> Compare Dr. Orr: “The Christian doctrine of Redemption certainly does not rest on the narrative in Gen. III., but it rests on the reality of the sin and guilt of the world, which would remain facts though the third chapter of Genesis never had been written.” *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 82.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Death of Christ: Revised and Enlarged Edition Including The Atonement and the Modern Mind*, pp. 277, 278. Hodder & Stoughton. 1911.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix D.

in the Scottish Church—and indeed in all Churches except those openly rationalistic—was that called plenary inspiration. Now this was ceasing to be even the prevailing view in the Free Church of Scotland. A prominent doctor and professor [Dr. Dods] expressly disclaimed it, and not only was he not prosecuted but he was retained as a teacher of the Church's ministry. A scholar of the younger generation [Rev. James Denney] frankly declared in the Assembly itself that 'for verbal inerrancy he cared not one straw, for it would be worth nothing if it were there [in the Confession of Faith] and it was not,' and the Assembly only applauded. All this meant a marked change, not, I repeat, in the confessional doctrine, but in the actual mind of the Church on the subject. As A. B. Davidson put it in his wicked way, 'Criticism has now percolated down to the lower strata of thinking minds; even the bishops have heard of it.'<sup>1</sup>

"Now the most interesting thing about this change, so far at least as the Free Church was concerned, was that it was associated with some of the most powerfully religious men in the Church and was a positive far more than a negative movement. It was not a mere denial of an old view. It was that the old view dropped off in the assertion that Scripture is infallible in its revelation of the salvation of God in Christ. Inspiration is the characteristic not of the text but of the message of the Bible; and it was men in the Church who were second to none in earnestness about that message who found they 'cared not a straw for verbal inerrancy.' It was under influences such as these that the Free Church, gradually and yet with astonishing rapidity, recognized a new view of what the inspiration of the Bible means. The change was not a rationalistic change. It was the reverse of that. And to many, instead of dethroning the Bible, it stamped it more and more with the seal of God as the authority for its saving message."<sup>2</sup>

The first chapters of Genesis, more than any other part of the Bible, are thought of in connection with the theory of inerrancy, and on the character of these chapters Dr. Denney has written with his usual candor. In the following extracts, which are destructive of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Davidson (1831-1902), professor of Oriental Languages in New College, Edinburgh, for nearly forty years, was one of the most famous Old Testament scholars and exegetes. Few teachers have been more revered, beloved, and influential. "Upon his sudden death the praises of the wise and good rained round his bier; and when a phalanx of scholars bore him to where he lies in the Grange Cemetery, half way between his two homes on the sunnier Edinburgh slope, it was with hearts beating to the ancient tune—"This is our master, famous, calm and dead." (Biographical Introduction to a volume of Davidson's sermons, *The Called of God*, p. 50. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1902.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. II., pp. 114-116.



older views, one is impressed, as so often elsewhere, with the constructive and religious note in Dr. Denney's thinking:—

“Perhaps what has troubled most people in this connection is the verdict of criticism on the opening chapters of the Bible. These are in form historical, but they manifestly treat of pre-historic times. The very moment we think of it, it is obvious that the story of the first man cannot be history, as the story of the siege and conquest of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans is history. The beginnings of man's life on earth lie far behind all records, and all traditions too. . . .

“The truth is that these stories illustrate, in the race to which God chose to reveal Himself, a stage through which the human mind passes in all races, and indeed in all individuals. Long before man is capable of science or history, he asks himself questions to which only science or history can give the answer, and not only asks, but answers them too. Now what is the technical name of these prescientific answers to scientific questions? for these prehistoric answers to historical questions? The name which is technically given to them is myths. Among people who do not know anything of mythology, myth is usually a term of contempt. But here it is a term of science. There is a stage at which, in this sense, the whole contents of the mind, as yet incapable of science or of history, may be called mythological. And what criticism shows us, in its treatment of the early chapters of Genesis, is that God does not disdain to speak to the mind, nor through it, even when it is at this lowly stage. Even the myth, in which the beginnings of human life, lying beyond human research, are represented to itself by the child-mind of the race, may be made the medium of revelation. God has actually taken these weak things of the world and things that are despised, and has drawn near to us, and spoken to our hearts, through them. I should not hesitate to say that the man who cannot hear God speak to him in the story of creation and the fall will never hear God's voice anywhere. But that does not make the first chapter of Genesis science, not the third chapter history. And what is of authority in these chapters is not the quasi-scientific or quasi-historical form, but the message, which through them comes to the heart, of God's creative wisdom and power, of man's native kinship to God, of his calling to rule over nature, of his sin, of God's judgment and mercy.”

“It is unfortunate, I think, that the questions as to man's nature have been usually discussed in theology in connection with what is called his original state. The question, What is man? has been treated as if it were convertible with the question, What

was Adam? But it is plain that we do not stand in the same relation to these two questions. Man is before us, or rather in us; we have the amplest opportunity for investigating his nature and constitution, and we have the whole range of Scripture to guide and correct our interpretation of these accessible facts. But Adam is not within our reach at all; and it is simply exposing ourselves, without any necessity whatever, to refutation by the progress of physical or archaeological science, when we advance statements about the primitive condition of man which have not only a religious but a physical and historical content. No one who knows what science or history is can imagine that either science or history is to be found in the first three chapters of Genesis; and it will be plain, I think, at a further stage, that to seek for them is quite unnecessary to the Christian position. Man's nature is revealed by what he is, interpreted by the course of God's dealings with him; it is revealed above all, and his destiny along with it, in Jesus Christ our Lord; and it is as gratuitous as it is futile to seek to discover it in all its integrity in a first man. The plain truth, and we have no reason to hide it, is that we do not know the beginnings of man's life, of his history, of his sin; we do not know them historically, on historical evidence; and we should be content to let them remain in the dark till science throws what light it can upon them. The unity of the human race—the organic connection of all its members—the identity in all of that double relation to nature and to God—the universality of the consciousness which Christians call sin—these are facts, whatever our ignorance may be of the original state of man, and of his original righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

5. The most distinguished minister and scholar in the Presbyterian Church today, in any land, is the Rev. Sir George Adam Smith, (1856—), Principal of Aberdeen University.

At the age of 23 Smith was appointed to take the place of W. Robertson Smith as Professor of Oriental Languages and Old Testament Exegesis in the University of Aberdeen. From 1882 to 1892 he was pastor of Queen's Cross Free Church in Aberdeen, after which he became professor of Old Testament Language, Literature, and Theology in the Free Church College, Glasgow. Since 1909 he has been Principal of Aberdeen University.

Because of certain positions taken in his book, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Theology*, pp. 217, 218, 78

(1901), an attempt was made to bring Dr. Smith before the General Assembly for trial. The attempt collapsed, owing to the support given Dr. Smith by such prominent leaders as Dr. Robert Rainy, Dr. James Orr, and Dr. Ross Taylor, as well as to the fact that the United Free Church of Scotland had come to see the value of the free critical study of the Old Testament. In defending Dr. Smith Dr. Orr said: "Whatever they might think of Professor Smith's speculations, there could be but one opinion among them that he at least had nobly proved in the past his faith, zeal, and evangelical fidelity, by works that had made his name a household word and an honour; that he had preached a living gospel, and had been made instrumental, as few were, by tongue of fire and vivid imagination and prophetic fervour to kindle faith and move to godliness in an age far lost to prophetic ideals. Rather than accentuate by continual controversy and new Committees, the points on which they might unhappily differ, let them unite in thanking God for the gift He had given in him, and for the work he had been enabled to accomplish for God's glory."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Smith has written a number of volumes marked by wide learning and accurate scholarship; but it is chiefly through his commentaries on Isaiah and the Minor Prophets that he has spoken to the mind and heart and conscience of the Church. "In them," writes Rev. Paul Dwight Moody, son of Dwight L. Moody, "he has blazed a way for Old Testament expositors, as he was the first to write constructively and devotionally from the modern or critical standpoint. For these are expositions pure and simple, yet more scholarly than many commentaries and more interesting and readable than some novels and most sermons, for his style is always graphic, vivid and clear. They are popular in the best sense, and have done

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<sup>1</sup> *The Religious Controversies of Scotland*, by the Rev Henry F. Henderson, M. A., p. 228. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. 1905.

more to help many to a proper conception of the Old Testament and Old Testament criticism than perhaps any other book in this generation."

"Professor George Adam Smith," writes Dr. Brastow, "the friend, colaborer, and biographer of Drummond, is justly recognized as one of the most gifted preachers as well as teachers of Scotland. Not only the volume of sermons on a variety of interesting subjects, dating back to the period of his active ministry in the church, that were published last year [1904], but the exceedingly attractive and helpful work on the book of Isaiah, illustrate the value, not for the preacher alone but for the teacher as well, of a decade or more of experience in pastoral life. Professor Smith's Biblical work discloses first of all, of course, the spirit of the scholar, but hardly less the spirit of the preacher. And these discourses, while they disclose preeminently the pastoral spirit, reveal also the scholar. . . . In all his critical estimates he would conserve a more genuine reverence for the Bible, and his apprehension of the worth of its religious teachings and his interpretation of their practical moral import are just, discriminating, positive, and clear. . . . Such discourses in the hands of such an interpreter illustrate the vast resources for the preacher of the Old Testament as it is laid open to us by modern Biblical studies. Their evangelical quality, so simple and genuine, so wholly free from all cant and conventionality, is also an element of strength. . . . The Free churches of Scotland, not less than those of England, are to be congratulated upon the gift of men who know well how to make tributary their scholarly acquisitions and their literary culture to the interpretation of the great realities of the Gospel of Redemption and to the higher moral and religious welfare of men."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Modern Pulpit*, by Lewis O. Brastow, D. D., Professor of Practical Theology in Yale University, pp. 312, 313, 316. Geo. H. Doran Co. 1906.

What are the views of this distinguished scholar and preacher on evolution and inerrancy?

In none of his writings has Dr. Smith given explicit expression to his views on evolution; but one may infer from the sympathetic spirit in which he has written the biography of Henry Drummond that he finds nothing in the theory that is incompatible with Christianity as interpreted by Presbyterians. A note from Dr. Smith confirms this inference.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Smith has left us in no doubt as to his view of the theory of verbal inerrancy. As a pastor, as a teacher of young men, and as biographer of Henry Drummond, to whom in a remarkable way men and women were drawn to confide their religious difficulties, Dr. Smith has had ample opportunity to see the harm done to mind and heart and faith by this impossible theory. He writes at length, and with the force and feeling of a man who has at heart the interests of true religion:—

“The Christian Church has twice over forgotten the liberty wherewith Christ has made her free; and in two directions has attempted to enforce the literal acceptance of the Old Testament, with results, in both cases, disastrous to the interests of religion.

“We are all aware that at various periods in the history of Christendom a spirit arose amongst its leaders not very different from that which moved so large a party in the primitive Church, and even some of the Apostles themselves, to insist upon the letter of the Law of Moses as binding upon all Christians. In later ages the representatives of this spirit did not propose, as those Jewish Christians did, to enforce circumcision, sacrifice, and other items of the Mosaic ritual; but in the same temper of literal obedience to the Old Testament they effected what was even worse. They revived many of the rigours of the Law, and quoted the most cruel tempers of the old dispensation, as the sanction of their own bigotries and persecutions. No branch of the Church has been innocent of this disloyalty to her Lord. If the tyrants and inquisitors of the Roman Church, in the days of its imperial power, have claimed the relentlessness of the old law as authority for their unspeakable cruelties to those whom they deemed heretics, our own Puritan fathers, on both sides of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E.

Atlantic, have not hesitated to defend their intolerance of opinions which differed from their own, their purchase and holding of slaves, their harshness to criminals, and their torture and murder of witches, by an appeal to the laws and customs of Israel. . . . The literal enforcement of the Old Testament, in disloyalty to Christ, should be called 'a millstone about the neck of Christianity.' From the first generation of the Church to the last but one, the theory of the equal and lasting divinity of the Jewish Scriptures has been fertile in casuistry, bigotry and cruel oppression of every kind.

"But while all that is now mainly a matter of historical interest, we have suffered in our own generation, and to a high degree still suffer, from the enforcement of the same spirit, operating in another direction. The advocates and agents of Biblical Criticism have often been charged with the creation of sceptics, and we may fully admit that where criticism has been conducted in a purely empirical spirit and without loyalty to Christ, it has shaken the belief of some in the fundamentals of religion, distracted others from the zealous service of God, and benumbed the preaching of Christ's gospel. Yet anyone who has had practical dealings with the doubt and religious bewilderment of his day can testify that those who have been led into unbelief by modern criticism are not for one moment to be compared in number with those who have fallen from faith over the edge of the opposite extreme. The dogma of a verbal inspiration, the dogma of the equal divinity of all parts of Scripture, the refusal to see any development, either from the ethnic religions to the religion of Israel, or any development within the religion of Israel itself—all these have had a disastrous influence upon the religious thought and action of our time. They have not only produced confusion in some of the holiest minds among us. They have not only paralysed the intellects of those who have adopted them, as every mechanical conception of the truth must do. But they have been the provocation to immense numbers of honest hearts to cast off religion altogether. Men have been trained in the belief that the holiest elements of our Creed, nay the assurance of the existence and love of God Himself, are bound up with the literal acceptance of the whole Bible, of which the Old Testament forms by much the greater part; so that whenever their minds awoke to the irreconcilable discrepancies of the Old Testament text, or their consciences to the narrow and violent temper of its customs, and they could no longer believe in it, as the equal and consistent message of God to men, their whole faith in Him, suspended from their earliest years upon this impossible view of it, was in danger of failing them, and in innumerable cases did fail them for the rest of their lives.

“Like every man who has read a little and thought a little, I was aware of this great and tragic commonplace of our day. But during the last year I have come across so many instances of it—each the story of a human soul—that it has become vivid and burning in my mind. It has been my privilege to go carefully through the correspondence of one who, probably more than any of our contemporaries, was consulted by persons of the religious experiences which I have described. . . . One and all tell how the literal acceptance of the Bible—the faith which finds in it nothing erroneous, nothing defective, and (outside of the sacrifice and Temple) nothing temporary—is what has driven them from religion. Henry Drummond was not a Biblical scholar; he was not an authority on the Old Testament. But the large trust which his personality and his writings so magically produced, moved men and women to address to him all kinds of questions. It is astonishing how many of these had to do with the Old Testament: with its discrepancies, its rigorous laws, its pitiless tempers, its open treatment of sexual questions, the atrocities which are narrated by its histories and sanctioned by its laws. Unable upon the lines of the teaching of their youth to reconcile these with a belief in the goodness of God, the writers had abandoned, or were about to abandon, the latter; yet they eagerly sought an explanation which would save them from such a disaster.

“I know no sadder tragedy than this innumerably repeated one, nor any service which it were better worth doing than the attempt to help men out of its perplexities. I firmly believe that such an attempt must lie along the lines indicated by Christ and His Apostles, and followed by the textual and historical criticism which takes its charter from Christ Himself. And if I am right, then we shall find in the task on which we have entered with this lecture, interests and responsibilities which are not merely scholastic or historical, but thoroughly evangelical—concerned with faith, and the assistance of souls in darkness, and the equipment of the Church of Christ for her ministry of God’s Word.”<sup>1</sup>

Because such an extract, however true, is in the nature of the case more or less destructive of older views, a few paragraphs from one of Dr. Smith’s sermons may be added showing the positive and constructive side of his view of the Bible. In his sermon on *The Word of God* he says:—

“It is true that parts of the Bible have been used throughout all the Christian centuries—used frequently and by all the Churches

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<sup>1</sup> *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, by George Adam Smith, D. D., LL. D., pp. 23-28. George H. Doran Co. 1901.

—to defend the divine right of tyrants, and to sanction the worst forms of intolerance. Yet it would be easy to show that such abuses were due never to the Bible itself, but to misinterpretations, especially of the Old Testament—misinterpretations made in disloyalty to Christ's teaching about the latter in the Sermon on the Mount, and in ignorance of His Spirit. It would be easy to show that such abuses were exceptional, and that in spite of them the Bible has been the charter of the freedom of the peoples of Europe, and the strongest inspiration of their private and public virtues—for instance, that the more debasing vices, which had been tolerated alike by the philosophers and statesmen of the Roman Empire, were by the influence of the Mosaic Law for the first time rebuked and restrained; and so much restrained that the very names of some of them have disappeared from popular knowledge. One could prove that the Bible built the home and provoked the beginnings of popular education; that it moulded new languages; that it articulated and enforced the efforts of young nations towards independence and their destined work for humanity; that it brought health to art and literature; that it enlightened the ignorant and ennobled the humble; that it gave courage to lonely men to stand alone for truth and justice; and that it endowed the oppressed poor of all the centuries with an energy and a hope of struggle with which nothing else could have inspired them. No history has illustrated this more than our own in Scotland . . . .

“Let us remember one great fact about Revelation. Revelation when it comes from God to man, has to take man as it finds him. It has to work upon him through the religious ideas and customs which he already possesses. It must use the language, the symbols, and to some extent the intellectual ideas and moral principles by which he already lives. New truths about God have to grow out of the sheaths of old ones, and for a time they must mix with the long-lingering influences of the latter. The moral education of the race can only be a gradual and a slow process. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord Himself has clearly expounded the fact of a progressive revelation under the Old Testament. He rebuked tempers and He abrogated laws, which as He says were permitted to men for the hardness of their hearts. Thus through Him the Bible itself contains the correction of its rudimentary stages: the enlargement of their ideals: the full purification of all their spirit. But while thus judging the earlier parts of the Bible our Lord equally affirmed that a divine, creative power had been at work in the religion of His people from the very first. And today there is not one of the most grudging critics of the Old Testament who is able to deny that, in spite of the low levels from which the religion of Israel had to start, there



was present in it from the first a moral purpose and energy which was not present in any of the other religions—the germ and potency of that perfect will of God, which through it was ultimately revealed to man . . . .

“Let us rather measure the Bible by the unity of ethical purpose which it manifests from first to last, by the completeness with which it leaves behind every trace of a defective morality, and by the uncompromising and invincible opposition, which the spirit of it offers to every political and religious interest, that insinuates itself as a substitute for the ethical service of God . . . .

“Its divine purity and unchangeable sovereignty are as little to be doubted as those of conscience itself . . . .

“With a penetration and a truthfulness, attempted by no other book, it uncovers the secrets of the human heart. Scripture gives my conscience new eyes to see me; new lips to condemn me; new ears to catch those voices of truth which murmur in my mind what I really am . . . .

“The story of this Divine Passion, which means both our condemnation, who have made it necessary by our sins, and our salvation, if we feel the penitence which it inspires as nothing else can, is found in these pages and in these alone. Hence, and hence only, their divine validity. Not their inerrancy; not that they answer to this or that theory of inspiration; but that independent of all theories, whether old or new, they tell to men the story of the travailing and suffering Love of God: the one Passion, the one Victory in all the history of time which can never grow old, nor lose its indispensable force for the sinful hearts of God’s children; *clean and enduring forever*; needing nothing, as Love needs nothing of external authority or argument, to prove itself to the heart that requires it.”<sup>1</sup>

Since Dr. Smith is looked upon by many as among the more radical of the higher critics, it will be instructive, in connection with the quotations given above, to recall a description of the higher critic that was reprinted in some of our religious papers: “The Higher Critic moves the light away, a little at a time, and finally takes it out of sight . . . . If I understand the average Higher Critic, he is an egotist who thinks himself above the Bible and looks down upon it . . . . He is like the assassin who examines the body to find the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Forgiveness of Sins*, by George Adam Smith, D. D., LL. D., pp. 31, 34, 35, 40, 46, 49. George H. Doran. 1904.

place where a blow will be fatal.”<sup>1</sup> Ignorance and prejudice can go no further. As a matter of fact the Church has never in any age had a body of men of finer scholarship, of more reverent spirit, or of higher Christian Character, than the school of Biblical critics to which Dr. Smith belongs. They have done more to throw light upon the Bible—its meaning, structure, and growth—than any other men of our day.<sup>2</sup>

I have thus given the views of five of the most widely known Presbyterian ministers of the past fifty years on the theory of evolution and the theory of verbal inerrancy. To summarize:—

Dr. Rainy accepted the principle of evolution as applicable both to nature in general and to man in particular, and thought that theologians might “be perfectly at ease” on the subject. He was disposed to hold the theory of inerrancy, although “under difficulties;” but he regarded the minor points raised by it as “in a large degree despicable” and “he refused out and out to identify this view with inspiration.”

Professor Drummond accepted the theory of evolution, believing its application to the Bible and theology to be of great value. He rejected the theory of inerrancy as a “fundamental mistake” and as having a “paralyzing and stunting effect” on thought.

Dr. Orr accepted the theory of evolution in general, believing that many of our ideas concerning God’s relation to the world “have received firmer grounding in the best thought of evolutionary science;” but he did not accept the evolutionary theory of man’s descent by slow gradations. The theory of inerrancy he rejected, holding it to be “a violent assumption which there is nothing in the Bible to support,” and affirming that to make belief in the Bible as a revelation of God’s

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<sup>1</sup> *The Bible and its Enemies*, by William Jennings Bryan, pp. 15, 16. Bible Institute and Colportage Association. 1921.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix F.

character and will depend on belief in the theory of inerrancy is "a most suicidal position."

Dr. Denney considered evolution to be "probably the most immediately and widely influential theory ever introduced to human intelligence," and with insight and ability sought to adjust parts of the older theology to evolutionary thought. For the theory of inerrancy he "cared not one straw."

Dr. Smith accepts the theory of evolution finding in it nothing incompatible with Christianity. The theory of inerrancy, and especially the literal acceptance and enforcement of the Old Testament, he regards as "a mill-stone about the neck of Christianity;" a theory "fertile in casuistry, bigotry, and cruel oppression of every kind."

These men were born and reared in the Presbyterian Church and were therefore from childhood familiar with its traditions, its doctrines, its worship, and its historic spirit. They all achieved distinction as scholars and thinkers,<sup>1</sup> and they were practically unanimous in accepting the theory of evolution and rejecting the theory of verbal inspiration. Yet so far from having been suspected by their Church of a departure from anything fundamental to Presbyterianism—and Presbyterianism is supposed to be pretty well understood in Scotland, called by Schaff "the classical soil of Presbyterian Christianity"—they were all honored with the most responsible position in the gift of their Church, that of training its young men for the ministry.

From the facts given in this chapter, Presbyterians may draw their own conclusion as to the compatibility of evolution with the historic faith of their Church.

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<sup>1</sup> While Henry Drummond was a gifted writer and speaker, he cannot be ranked high as a scholar or thinker.



## Chapter V.

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Two Types of Presbyterianism.

This is the point at which 'broad' churchism is in the right against an evangelical Christianity which has not learned to distinguish between its faith—in which it is unassailable—and inherited forms of doctrine which have been unreflectingly identified with it. Natural as such identification may be, and painful as it may be to separate in thought things which have coalesced in strong and sacred feelings, there is nothing more certain than that the distinction must be recognized if evangelical Christians are to maintain their intellectual integrity, and preach the gospel in a world which is intellectually free. We are bound to Christ, and would see all men so bound; but we must leave it to Christ to establish His ascendancy over men in His own way—by the power of what He is and of what He has done—and not seek to secure it beforehand by the imposition of chains of our forging.—James Denney.

Nor should it be forgotten that the clang of controversy, whether admirable from the ethical point of view or not, has ever been an important and necessary condition of intellectual progress. At no time has either a person or a principle become epoch-making without having first encountered criticism and condemnation. Some element of antagonism seems necessary for the propagation of truth. It is not necessarily a waste of time, therefore, as some good men have supposed, when a Church finds herself engaged in bitter and prolonged theological strife. So far from this, it is the means which Divine Providence employs for leading the Church into larger liberty and into fuller possession of the truth, which is her best heritage.—Henry F. Henderson.

CHAPTER V.

In the preceding chapter only Scotch Presbyterians have been quoted. Why no American Presbyterians? The answer is that, for the purposes of this pamphlet, there are none to quote—none that are at all representative. The ministry of the American Presbyterian Church has no doubt had its share of strong men, men of learning and ability; but it has had no progressive thinkers or scholars of note—none at least who have left their impress upon the Church, much less upon the religious thought of the nation. The contrast in this respect between the two great branches of Presbyterianism—the Scotch and the American—is so striking as to justify a moment's attention.

Of the extreme conservatism of American Presbyterianism, and its infertility in progressive thought, there can be little question. One of its historians has described the Presbyterian Church as "the most conservative and most theological of the American Churches."<sup>1</sup> Of the twelve leading progressive thinkers and preachers discussed in Buckham's *Progressive Religious Thought in America* (1919) and Hoyt's *The Pulpit and American Life* (1921), not one belonged to the Presbyterian Church. The most competent foreign observer of American life, the late James Bryce, says: "The new ideas continued to grow, and the sentiment in favour of letting clergymen as well as lay church members put a lax construction on the doctrinal standards drawn up in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has spread as widely in Scotland as in England. The Presbyterian Churches in America [italics mine] and the Roman Catholic Church now stand almost alone among the larger Christian bodies in retaining something of the ancient rigidity. Even the Roman Church begins to feel the solvent power of

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, by Robert Ellis Thompson, D. D., p. 272. Scribner's Sons. 1895.

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these researches."<sup>1</sup> A seminary professor writes that, excepting Union Theological Seminary, New York, which is no longer under Presbyterian control, not a single Presbyterian Seminary in this country has published in our generation a significant book. "Until after the division of 1837," says Dr. Thompson, "American Presbyterianism made no important addition to the literature of theology."<sup>2</sup> It has made many additions since then, some of them very important; but their importance does not lie in their original or progressive character. At the present time, for works of real scholarship in practically all fields of religious thought, we are almost wholly dependent on the Church of England, the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and the Congregational Church.

The difference between American and Scotch Presbyterians in their attitude towards modern thought is not easy to account for, but a few facts may be mentioned that throw some light on the subject.

(1) Presbyterian Churches are supposed to be Calvinistic; but Calvinism may be appraised from two very different standpoints. On the one hand it may be thought of as a great intellectual, ethical, and religious principle—the principle of the sovereignty of God, which is the sovereignty of truth and righteousness, in the mind and heart and will of man. This is a radical and progressive principle. In the last analysis, obedience to this principle means that between man, and God speaking to him through his reason and conscience, nothing can interpose itself as a final authority. It therefore means freedom, but it is freedom of a very responsible kind—far removed from anything of the nature of license or personal whim. This principle has rarely found more notable exemplification than in the life and work of John Calvin.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Contemporary Biography*, p. 313. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Co.

<sup>2</sup> *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> This great principle is thus set forth in the Confession of Faith, XX:2: "God

Not true



On the other hand Calvinism may be regarded as a system of doctrine. A word is necessary here concerning distinctive doctrinal Calvinism, for probably very few Presbyterians know just what it is. In general it may be said that the Presbyterian standards embody two sets of doctrines. In one set are such doctrines as the trinity, the deity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, regeneration, sanctification, and so forth. These doctrines, or the most important of them, constitute the foundation of all creeds that are known as orthodox and evangelical, and they are held by non-Calvinists (Methodists, for example) as well as by Calvinists. In the other set of doctrines are absolute predestination (issuing in unconditional election and its corollary, reprobation or preterition), total depravity, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and final perseverance. It is these latter that constitute *distinctive* doctrinal Calvinism. While Calvin did not originate these doctrines, he gave them such clearness of statement, carried certain of them so uncompromisingly to their logical conclusion, and made them so prominent in his system of theology, that they have ever since been associated with his name. They later came to be known as the Five Points of Calvinism.

These two conceptions of Calvinism are distinctly separable. As an intellectual, ethical, and religious principle Calvinism is progressive. As a doctrinal system it is in part static or obsolescent. A man may accept *in toto* the doctrinal system of Calvin and yet be an entire stranger to the spirit of the great reformer;

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alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also." Of this paragraph Dr. Schaff says: "The Confession expresses for the first time among the confessions of faith, whether consistently or not, the true *principle* of religious liberty. . . . in the noble sentiment of Chapter XX:2." (*The Creeds of Christendom*, by Philip Schaff, D. D., LL. D., vol. I., p. 799. Harper Bros. 1899).

while a man may reject essential parts of the system and yet be a true Calvinist.

It is an easy matter to show that John Calvin (1509-1564) was essentially progressive, but his progressiveness was of the kind that is the truest conservatism. Born and reared in the most dogmatic of Churches—the Catholic—and destined by his father for the priesthood, Calvin left the faith of his parents and of his early years and became the most radical opponent of Catholicism, and the greatest leader of the Reformation in the establishment of responsible freedom.<sup>1</sup> As a young man he was deeply moved by the humanist spirit of his age, becoming a classical before he became a Biblical scholar. He was an eager disciple of the “new learning.” “All the creative minds of the Reformed Church,” says A. M. Fairbairn, “were children of the Renaissance.”<sup>2</sup> While Calvin took over much from the past—all that approved itself to his reason and conscience—he habitually put truth above tradition: “What was the opinion of Jerome,” he writes, “I regard not; let us inquire what is truth.”<sup>3</sup> It is this union of continuity and change—the two-fold law of life—that always distinguishes the true thinker from the inflexible traditionalist on the one hand and the shallow liberalist on the other.

An unwearied student, and the greatest Biblical scholar of the Reformation, Calvin was singularly modern in his interpretation of Scripture, using the philological and historical method of exegesis—now in vogue among all scholars—instead of the allegorical or dogmatic. After describing Calvin as “the greatest exegete and theologian of the Reformation” and as

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<sup>1</sup> Although destined for the priesthood, Calvin was never ordained to the ministry in either the Catholic or the Protestant Church. He was a layman.

<sup>2</sup> “Calvin and the Reformed Church,” chapter XI., *Cambridge Modern History*, p. 348. 1904. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Co.

<sup>3</sup> Calvin's *Institutes*, vol. I., p. 316 (Allen's edition). Jerome, an eminent scholar, was the translator of the Latin Vulgate, the authoritative Bible of the Catholic Church. He died A. D. 420.

“one of the greatest interpreters of Scripture who ever lived,” Canon Farrar says that his commentaries, “almost alone among those of his epoch, are still a living force.” He further speaks of Calvin’s “abhorrence of hollow orthodoxy;” of his independence “in his views on the New Testament;” of his “anticipation of modern criticism in his views about the Messianic prophecies;” of his refusal to “defend or harmonize what he regards as an oversight or mistake in the sacred writers;” and adds: “If he held that Scripture flowed from the very mouth of God, he gives us no explanation of his own admission of inaccuracies in Scripture, of his free tone of criticism, of his almost contemptuous rejection of the whole sacrificial and ceremonial law.”<sup>1</sup> With the same freedom Calvin would have modified the most fundamental of theological doctrines. “He felt,” writes Dr. Arthur S. Hoyt, “that the Trinity should be restated; that the explanation of the Deity of Christ—the two natures in one person—led to many misconceptions.” The fact is there was no opinion, tradition, or doctrine, however ancient or sacred, that Calvin hesitated to bring under the review of his learning, his critical reason, his strong common sense. A man of whom such things can be said—a man of such independence and courage in the pursuit of truth—is far removed from traditionalism or obscurantism.

Now, of these two conceptions of Calvinism—as a living principle and as a doctrinal system—it is the latter, almost exclusively, that American Presbyterianism has been concerned to preserve and perpetuate. Our theologians have elaborated and systematized the doctrines of the Presbyterian standards in compendiums of theology that for logical precision and completeness leave little to be desired. But these expositions are without originality, and, unmodernized

<sup>1</sup> *History of Interpretation*, by Frederic W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., pp. 342-352. E. P. Dutton. 1886.

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in any part, they are becoming less and less suggestive and convincing; while those parts that are distinctively Calvinistic are felt to be extreme and to possess little reality or stimulus for the mind of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Yet this system of doctrine is bound by a rigid ordination vow upon the conscience of our rising ministry.<sup>2</sup> The tendency of such a procedure is to make the apprehension and practice of spiritual Calvinism, as a progressive principle, difficult and dangerous; and as a matter of fact, the progressive thinkers of the American Presbyterian Church have been either imported or deposed—or they have remained silent. Dr. James McCosh, former president of Princeton, was from Scotland; Dr. Philip Schaff, the Church historian, was from Switzerland; and Dr. John Kelman, probably the leading progressive thinker in the American Presbyterian pulpit today, is from Scotland. Dr. James Woodrow was unable to retain his chair in Columbia Theological Seminary, Columbia, S. C. Dr. David Swing, Dr. C. A. Briggs, and Dr. Henry Preserved Smith were deposed from the ministry, and Dr. A. C. McGiffert entered the Congregational Church.

In striking contrast Scotch Presbyterianism, while adhering in the main to the doctrinal system of Calvin, seems rarely to have been without men who had something of the progressive spirit of the great scholar and reformer. "To Scotland," says H. F. Henderson, "has fallen the honour of leading the way among English-speaking nations in the dispersion of religious ideas and the discussion of theological problems. She has

<sup>1</sup> Take as an example the recent volume of theology, *Christian Salvation*, by Dr. Robert A. Webb, late Professor of Systematic Theology in the Presbyterian Seminary, Louisville, Ky. The method and spirit of this book seem to me to be not inaccurately described in the following sentence: "A hard, unchanging, inflexible traditionalism, repeating with strong emphasis and defiance the scholastic dogmatism of the seventeenth century, conceding nothing to the new modes of thought that have risen and grown strong since then, and learning nothing from them." (*The Theology of the Reformed Church in its Fundamental Principles*, by William Hastie, D. D., p. 20. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. 1904.)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix G.

had a democratic Church, and that, along with a rigid adherence to the Confession of Faith, has carried her into this proud position.<sup>1</sup> As she has been accustomed to bring all her affairs before a popular tribunal of clerics and laymen, every apostle of progress that has appeared in her midst has had to fight his way through a phalanx of resistance and prejudice, with the result that he has always had a large and influential constituency to address; and the more his views have been challenged, the more widely they have spread. For two centuries Scotland has been a home and battlefield of theology; and while, during that long period, no theologian of the first rank has appeared, none of the calibre of Aquinas or St. Augustine, there have never been lacking men remarkable for their spiritual genius, interpreters of the mind of God, defenders and expounders of the Word, and masters in the understanding and unfolding of the method of Divine revelation."<sup>2</sup>

\* true

It is these men who kept alive in Scotch Presbyterianism something of the progressive spirit of Calvin. They put the voice of God, speaking through reason and conscience, above ecclesiastical authority and public opinion. To an essentially conservative temperament they wedded a spirit of progress. That Scotch Presbyterianism today has a heritage of responsible freedom, and the creative scholarship that can live only in an atmosphere of freedom, is a debt that Presbyterians everywhere owe to these men. In their work the striking remark of A. B. Davidson

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<sup>1</sup> The adherence of Scotch Presbyterian ministers to the Confession is not so rigid, at least at the present time, as Mr. Henderson's words indicate. Dr. John Kelman, pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, formerly of the United Free Church of Scotland, writes: "The state of matters in regard to the United Free Church of Scotland is that that Church retains the Confession of Faith as one of her principal standards, but that she qualifies her adherence to it by a declaratory act explaining that this adherence refers only to the matters of main import in the Confession and not to all the details. If in any specific case the question should arise whether the matter is of the substance or a mere detail, it is to be settled by the General Assembly of the Church."

<sup>2</sup> *The Religious Controversies of Scotland*, p. 2.

finds illustration: "A nation never reaches a truth; a man does, and it becomes a national inheritance."

2. Another fact to be noted is that the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland man their theological schools with their most progressive scholars and thinkers. The Free Church of Scotland, for example, was organized in 1843, and in proportion to its age and membership it has more scholars of distinction in its theological schools than any other Church in the world. Without exception these men have been loyal to the fundamental principles of the Christian religion as interpreted by Presbyterianism; but they have also been loyal to the increasing light and truth which it is the privilege of our age to possess and to rejoice in. All the theological professors mentioned in this discussion—Rainy, Drummond, Davidson, Lindsay, Robertson Smith, Dods, Bruce, Candlish, Whyte, Orr, Denney, and Adam Smith—have shown this twofold loyalty. The rising ministry, therefore, of the most influential branch of the Presbyterian Church is trained by men of the highest Christian character and the finest creative scholarship. Such training insures, if anything can, both progressiveness and stability in a ministry.

3. Lastly, these theological battles of two centuries, fought out before popular tribunals and discussed in every congregation and in every home, have accustomed Scotch Presbyterians to conflict of opinions. It is only through such discipline that Christian men and women become intelligent, virile minded, and tolerant; not only unafraid of change, but hospitable to it as one of the indispensable conditions of health and progress. To proclaim views that disturb the minds of Christians is not an agreeable thing to do, but it is part of the price that has been paid for progress in every age and in every branch of the Church. Simple faith, even when associated with beautiful Christian living, is often unthinking faith; and beyond a certain point, consideration for it may become be-

trayal of the truth, and therefore of the deeper interests of faith itself. Much of this fear of theological change would pass away, if it were clearly understood that essential Christianity is not theology, but is the spirit of Christ as leaven in the human heart—a possession that lies beyond the reach of any theological change whatsoever.

What American Presbyterianism needs today is greater freedom and courage in the pursuit of truth. The theory of evolution, the modern study of the Bible, the need of a truer view of inspiration, and the necessity for the modernization of some parts of our theology, have put upon the Church a responsibility that can be discharged only by patient thought and candid speech. "As things change around us," wrote Dr. Rainy, "immobility may become at once the most insidious and the most pernicious form of inconsistency. The questions that arise must be dealt with. If they bring trials they bring benefits far more weighty. They force the Church from the mere traditional impression of her principles and practice to sink afresh into the meaning of both and to apply that meaning under new conditions and amid new perplexities. . . . The Church of Christ has no liberty to become the slave even of its own history."





## APPENDIX A.

The following extracts are from addresses by Mr. Voliva which were printed in the *Theocrat* (Feb. 4, 11, 18, and May 20, 1922) and in *Leaves of Healing* (March 4, April 1, June 10, July 8, 15, 1922). These are the official publications of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion. Mr. Voliva's views are not here given to amuse, but to show that he is consistent where others are not. Accepting the theory of verbal inspiration he endeavors to carry its implications to their logical conclusion, both in belief and in practice. He is consistent in putting modern astronomy, evolution, modern medicine, and the higher criticism in the same class: for evolution and modern astronomy are equally at variance with the theory of an inerrant Bible; medical practice is superfluous if James 5:14-15 is to be taken at its face value; while the modern critical study of the Bible has shown from abundant material the impossibility of reconciling the theory of inerrancy with the facts. We may assume that if Mr. Voliva doesn't put to death witches (Exodus 22:18), and those who strike or curse their parents (Exodus 21:15, 17), and those who work on the Sabbath (Exodus 31:15), it is only because Uncle Sam or the State of Illinois might raise serious objection.

"The Bible was written by the finger of God. It was dictated by God to holy men who wrote as the Spirit inspired them and 'gave them utterance.' God is the Author of it. I am now fifty-two years old. I entered the ministry when I was sixteen years of age, and I always have stood firmly by the verbal inspiration of the Bible."

"I am not preaching today one thing that I did not believe when I was a little boy ten years old—not one. I stand where I stood when I sat in the 'love feast' in the little old Methodist Church. I am a regular old moss-back, an old-time follower of Jesus Christ, and I praise God today that none of these newfangled, demon-inspired systems have ever touched me. I pray that God

will forbid that they ever shall touch me! I stick to the Good Old Book, and I read it with greater joy today than ever before.”

“It used to be Robert G. Ingersoll delivering lectures at a dollar per, Thomas Paine, Blatchford of England, and others, who made small fortunes out of attacking the Bible. But they are all dead. Today, thousands of ministers in the churches and professors in the colleges, universities, and seminaries, who, under the garb of Christ, teach higher criticism, are doing the work far more effectively.”

“We asserted that the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion accepts the Bible as the Inspired Word of God, that we believe that the Bible in the original languages was verbally inspired—not only the thoughts, but also the words. We stated, further, that we believe all that the Bible has to say regarding the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars, and that we do not propose to surrender one iota of ground to infidel astronomers. Modern Astronomy, Evolution, and Higher Criticism are a trinity of evils; in other words, they are triplets, and the Devil is their father. The Devil’s intention in originating and foisting these false systems—Modern Astronomy, Evolution, and Higher Criticism—upon the world was to bring about the rejection of the Bible as the Inspired Word of God, to destroy the faith of the people in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to ridicule and make absurd the whole scheme of redemption.”

“The laughable thing to a thinking man is that the mere hypotheses of Copernicus are presented now in all the schools as facts!”

“Who that has given this subject any real, serious consideration can believe that the earth is a whirling globe? To accept this theory and believe in it is to reject the Bible as the Inspired Word of God, and to do violence to all of our God-given senses; and we assert here that not a single fact in nature can be found to support this theory.”

“I do not believe that this earth is a whirling globe rotating on its axis, revolving in its orbit, and shooting off in the direction of Hercules; in other words, moving in three different directions at the same time. I have lived in Australia, and I did not walk with my head hanging down: I walked with my head up, just as I do here—which would be impossible if the earth were a whirling globe. I will pay not only one thousand dollars for a single proof of the sphericity of the earth, or that it has any axial, orbital or other motions whatever, but I will pay five thousand dollars.”

“The Bible is the Inspired Word of God. The Bible plainly teaches that the earth is an outstretched, stationary plane—in other words, that it has no motions.”

“Let it be kept constantly in mind that our position is that you cannot believe the Bible and Modern Astronomy at the same time. You must accept one and reject the other, for you cannot accept both. All persons who profess to be Christians, to believe in the Inspired Word of God, to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, should be compelled to come out in the open and reject the infidel theories of Modern Astronomy, and to take their stand uncompromisingly for the Word of God. When we were children, we were taught (and all the children in the schools today are being taught the same thing) that the earth is round like an orange, that it is a whirling globe of land and water, that it is only a tiny speck in the universe, that it is only one of many worlds. Are these theories of Modern Astronomy supported by any facts? We say emphatically that they are not! That they are a contradiction of the plain Word of God, and that their advocacy has done incalculable harm!”

“According to the Inspired Word of God, the moon has a light of its own, and the assertion of modern astronomers that the moon shines with light reflected from the sun is without any support whatever.”

“The teaching of this portion of God’s Inspired Word [Psalm 19:4, 5, 6, Revised Version] is that the sun moves over and around the earth, which is fixed and has no motions whatever.”

“God’s Word teaches that the sun, the moon, and the stars were made for the earth, and that in comparison with the earth they are very small, and they are not very far away. In fact, they circle in the firmament, or dome, of Heaven.”

“The animal kingdom is under the curse, and there are ferocious and poisonous animals, as a result of sin.”

“As God said: ‘Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the field.’ One does not need any greater proof of the inspiration of the Bible than this statement. They can bring to bear upon it all their worldly wisdom, but they cannot gainsay it. The curse rests upon man, upon the animal and the vegetable kingdom,—upon everything, it makes no difference what I might mention; whether it is an apple

tree or a pear tree or a gooseberry bush. Thorns and thistles and numerous other things curse the face of the earth, and in order to raise a crop it is a constant battle against ragweeds, jimson weeds, Spanish needles, cockleburs, chinchbugs, and various other things."

"I read in my Bible, 'I am the Lord who healeth thee' (Exodus 15:26). I read in my Bible, 'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick' (James 5:14, 15).

"I will give five hundred dollars to any one who can find a line between the lids of the Bible in support of doctors and drugs, surgeons and knives! The whole medical business is of the Devil! God has nothing to do with it!"

"Devil possession is a stern reality!"

No doubt many will feel that some of Mr. Voliva's views are unique in their irrationality. Such is not really the case. Nothing would be easier than to point out religious views or doctrines, based upon a literal interpretation of Scripture and held by millions of Christian people, for which there is not only not an atom of rational evidence, but against which the evidence is just as palpable and convincing as that against the antiquated astronomy believed in by Mr. Voliva.

## APPENDIX B.

There are perhaps some who do not understand just what Dr. Rainy means by difficulties about the Canon. The word *canon* means a *measuring rod* or *rule*, and it came to be applied to the Bible as the rule of faith and practice. The adjective *canonical*, as used ecclesiastically of a particular book, means that the book is regarded as inspired and authoritative, and therefore entitled to a place in the sacred Scriptures.

Different Churches have different Canons of Scripture. The Old Testament of the Catholic Church has seven more books than that of the Protestant Church, besides additions to Esther and Daniel. Protestants regard these extra books as uncanonical and speak of them as the Apocrypha. The Syrian Church omits from its Bible Second and Third John, Second Peter, Jude, and Revelation. The Coptic Church omits Revelation. The Bible of the Greek Church contains most of the Apocrypha of the Catholic Bible.

As well as I can remember, I had as a boy some such idea concerning the origin and growth of the Bible as this: God dictated the Pentateuch to Moses, or else handed it to him already written—in English. Moses put it in the Ark of the Covenant. The other books were produced in the same way and added to the Pentateuch in chronological order. By some general supernatural illumination everybody recognized each book as divine as soon as it appeared, and of course the Bible was so regarded and received when complete. If the Bible had actually come to us by such a mechanical process—by such straight and clear “mathematical lines”—there never would have been any difficulties about its origin and history.

As a matter of fact, difficulties connected with the origin and growth of the Canon extend far back into

Old Testament times. For example, the Old Testament is composed of three collections of books known as the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Writings*. The *Law* was the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible. The *Prophets* included historical books—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings—as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets. The *Writings* comprised all the rest of the Old Testament books. These three divisions are still preserved in the Hebrew Bible, where also the order of books is very different from that in our Old Testament.

There are difficulties connected with the authorship, date, and canonization of the parts of each of these three collections, and with the assembling of the three into one Book. The *Law* was the first collection to be looked upon as authoritative, to which later were added the *Prophets*, and to these two, later still, the *Writings*. It was a long and gradual process, and debate and uncertainty concerning the canonicity of some of the books—especially Esther, the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes—lasted into the first Christian century. The Canon of the Old Testament was not closed by the Jews until about A. D. 90.

There were also difficulties connected with the growth of the New Testament Canon. Many books were written besides those in our New Testament, and the question was, which were to be looked upon as authoritative for faith and practice. During the first three or four centuries books were read in the Churches, and quoted as Scripture, which are not in our New Testament; and some that are in our New Testament—especially Hebrews, James, Jude, Second Peter, Second and Third John, and Revelation—were here and there spoken against. Different collections of books were in circulation, and it was not until A. D. 397 that a local Catholic council, meeting in Carthage, Africa, adopted as authoritative a collection identical with our present New Testament. This was only a provincial

council, and the Catholic Church as a whole did not officially declare its present Bible to be the canonical Scriptures until the Council of Trent, A. D. 1546.

Protestants, who came out from the Catholic Church during the 16th century, differed as to the canonicity of certain books. As a rule they rejected the Apocrypha, although these books used to be printed, more commonly than now, in Protestant Bibles as an appendix to the Old Testament. Martin Luther spoke of James as an epistle of straw, and thought little of Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation. Calvin had his doubts about a few New Testament books, but was not willing to exclude any.

It is easy, therefore, to see what Dr. Rainy meant when he spoke of difficulties about the Canon. Yet in spite of all these difficulties what Dr. Rainy says, or implies, is true: namely, that we *have* the Bible, and any honest man can find all the moral and religious truth he needs to live by, whether he seeks it in the Protestant Bible, the Catholic Bible, the Syrian Bible the New Testament alone, or only in certain favorite books, or even passages.





### APPENDIX C.

In Dr. F. R. Tennant's book, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*, p. 78, is the following: "Prof. Orr gives references which are relevant in his *Christian View of God and the World*, but the natural science of this work must be received in some cases with great caution, inasmuch as it onesidedly represents the opinion of the minority in the scientific world."<sup>1</sup>

In order to test Dr. Orr's trustworthiness in matters of science, I submitted three of his statements to two of the most competent paleontologists in the United States: Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, President of the American Museum of Natural History, and Professor William Berryman Scott, Professor of Geology and Paleontology, Princeton University. The statements submitted were:

"Evolution, as I said earlier, is not Darwinism, and the Darwinian idea of the production of man by slow gradations from lower ape-like forms is one which I think is being discredited on scientific grounds."

"There was the famous Java case—the best yet produced—but scientific men of the highest rank early pronounced its claims unfounded."

"We read in books of 500,000 years or 200,000 years as the period of man's abode on earth. There is no need for Christian people taking alarm at these exaggerated estimates. Science itself is rapidly retrenching them."<sup>2</sup>

Following are the letters of Dr. Osborn and Dr. Scott commenting on these statements.

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Co.

<sup>2</sup> *Sidelights on Christian Doctrine* (1909), pp. 87, 88.

NEW YORK, N. Y.,  
May the first,  
Nineteen hundred twenty-two.

My dear Mr. Smith:

Thanking you for your letter of April 27, I will answer your questions as best I can:

Existing evidence regarding the ancestry of man from lower forms of primates is absolutely irresistible. In the *Hall of the Age of Man* of the American Museum all this evidence is brought together.

Renewed investigation of the Trinil Pithecanthropus shows that the anterior part of the brain is of much higher type and a more pro-human type than was originally supposed.

Geologic evidence as to the antiquity of man has recently been reinforced by the discovery of Tertiary man preceding Quaternary time, which is estimated by conservative geologists, like Secretary Walcott of the Smithsonian Institution, to be 400,000 years.

Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN,  
President.

Mr. Hay Watson Smith.

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PRINCETON, N. J., May 3, 1922.

The Reverend Hay Watson Smith,  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

Dear Mr. Smith:

I have your letter of April 27th, and am glad to answer your questions to the best of my ability. You are at liberty to use my name in connection with these answers if you so desire.

Your first quotation from Dr. Orr's book is—

“Evolution, as I said earlier, is not Darwinism, and the Darwinian idea of the production of man by slow gradations from lower ape-like forms is one which I think is being discredited on scientific grounds.”

It is quite true that evolution is not Darwinism. The latter term should be restricted to the theory of natural selection, which is Darwin's explanation of the evolutionary process. But that Darwin's idea of man's origin from ape-like forms is now being discredited on scientific grounds is not true. On the contrary, the discoveries which have been made in recent years in England, on the continent of Europe, in Asia, and in Africa are strongly confirmatory of Darwin's belief. It is true that we have no such complete pedigree for man as we have for many animals, such as horses, camels, rhinoceroses, etc.; but there can be little doubt that it is merely a question of time when this pedigree shall be completely filled up.

Secondly:

“There was the famous Java case—the best yet produced—but scientific men of the highest rank early pronounced its claims unfounded.”

You ask whether they do so now, and to this I think the answer should be—No; although some very cautious writers, like Dr. A. Smith Woodward of the British Museum, express themselves in a very doubtful manner about the significance of Dubois' discovery. The material is unfortunately very incomplete, and therefore care in founding any important inferences upon it is obviously called for. On the other hand, new examinations of the *Pithecanthropus* skull go to confirm its importance as a probable human ancestor.

Thirdly:

“We read in books of 500,000 years or 200,000 years as the period of man's abode upon earth. There is no need for Christian people taking alarm at these exaggerated estimates. Science itself is rapidly retrenching them.”

I do not think this statement can be maintained, though estimates in years of geological time are seldom of much value. We can only say that the time involved is of that order of magnitude, and that man has been upon earth many tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of years. The work of Baron DeGeer in Sweden is giving us a real chronology of the time which has elapsed since the final disappearance of the great Scandinavian glacier, and when his work is completed it will be possible to speak with some precision of the age of mankind. So far from retrenching the figures, it is now probable that DeGeer will increase them.

Hoping that this will answer your purpose, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) W. B. Scott.



## APPENDIX D.

“Till the days of Robertson Smith.” Rev. William Robertson Smith, M.A., LL.D., (1846-1894), was one of the most versatile and gifted scholars and teachers that the Presbyterian Church has produced. The late Viscount Bryce, in an appreciative sketch, speaks of him as one of the most remarkable men of his time and says that had he lived in the prime of the Italian Renaissance, the fame of his learning would have filled half Europe.<sup>1</sup>

In 1870, at the age of 24, Smith was chosen to fill the chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis in the Free Church College at Aberdeen—a position he held until 1881. On account of his eminence as a scholar, he was asked to prepare a number of articles on Biblical subjects for the 9th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the edition of which he afterwards became editor-in-chief. Some of these, especially the article “Bible,” excited great alarm throughout the Free Church. This was to be expected, since the views advocated by Professor Smith concerning the authorship, date, and structure of certain books of the Bible were new to the people of Scotland, and were subversive of traditions that had been part of the faith of centuries. To give up views long held, without convincing evidence that they are erroneous, indicates weakness; and with the evidence in this case, the Presbyterians of Scotland as a whole were entirely unacquainted.

In 1876 agitation against Professor Smith began, and later he asked for a formal trial. The request was granted and in 1878, before the Presbytery of Aberdeen, began the most famous heresy trial of modern times. The principal charges against Professor Smith were: “(1) Denying that the Aaronic

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<sup>1</sup>*Studies in Contemporary Biography.*

priesthood was instituted in the wilderness. (2) Alleging that the legislative parts of Deuteronomy were a prophetic recasting of the Mosaic law not older than the seventh century [700-600] B. C. (3) Denying the verbal infallibility of the books of Chronicles.”<sup>1</sup>

It is important to understand the exact point at issue in this trial—the only point or question that the ecclesiastical courts were to decide. It was not whether Professor Smith held the views with which he was charged—he did hold them. It was not whether those views were true or false—that could be determined only by competent scholars after patient research, not by ecclesiastical authority. The question to be decided was, whether the views held by Professor Smith were compatible with the teachings of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Presbytery decided that they were, and Professor Smith was acquitted. Appeal was then taken to the Synod of Aberdeen and finally to the General Assembly, with acquittal by both courts.

It is not to be supposed, in the vote of any of the three courts, that all of those favoring acquittal approved of Professor Smith's views. Many of them did not. Almost certainly a majority of the members of the Free Church did not. Acquittal meant only that the views held by Professor Smith were not at variance with the standards of the Free Church.

But the agitation continued, and in 1881 the Assembly, without a trial, removed Professor Smith from his chair in the Free Church College at Aberdeen, without deposing him from the ministry of the Church. The ground on which this action was taken was that the views of Professor Smith were “of an unsettling tendency.” Of this action Bryce says: “Although the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Religious Controversies of Scotland*, p. 210. The word *prophetic* as used in item (2) does not, of course, mean predictive. It means written under the influence or in the spirit of the prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah—who wrote or preached in the previous century, 800-700 B. C.

party of repression triumphed so far as to deprive him of his chair, the victory virtually remained with him, not only because he had shown that the Scottish Presbyterian standards did not condemn the views he held, but also because his defence and the discussions which it occasioned had, in bringing those views to the knowledge of a great number of thoughtful laymen, led such persons to reconsider their own position. Some of them found themselves forced to agree with Smith. Others, who distrusted their capacity for arriving at a conclusion, came at least to think that the questions involved did not affect the essentials of faith, and must be settled by the ordinary canons of historical and philological criticism. Thus the trial proved to be a turning-point for the Scottish Churches."<sup>1</sup>

Although there were strong men on both sides of this controversy, yet the leading ministers in the Free Church—such as Dr. Robert Rainy, Dr. Alexander Whyte, Dr. A. B. Davidson, Dr. T. M. Lindsay, and Dr. J. S. Candlish—voted for Professor Smith's acquittal. But it was one of these men, Dr. Rainy, who in 1881 led the movement which resulted in the removal of Professor Smith from his chair; not on the ground that his views had been proved untrue or at variance with the standards of the Church, but on grounds of expediency.

It is not necessary to discuss here the wisdom or the justice of Dr. Rainy's course—the most disputed act of his life; but it ought in fairness to be said that Dr. Rainy was a strong advocate of the right of critical inquiry into the authorship, date, and literary structure of the books of the Bible. His biographer says: "He laid it down emphatically that they could not have [in the Smith case] a heresy libel; 'to the very last he would refuse the idea of making such questions rank

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<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Contemporary Biography*, pp. 311, 312. Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Co.

as confessionally settled.' He did not regard the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as a matter of faith and he did not believe—this was in reply to Dr. Moody Stuart, who claimed our Lord's *imprimatur* to that view—that Jesus Christ and the Apostles 'ever said anything on that subject.' He deprecated the impression that 'a great crisis had arisen' and viewed the matter as 'providential,' one benefit of which would be 'to improve the education of their minds and the minds of their people in reference to this whole class of subjects.' " And to a friend he wrote: "I am still more anxious to avoid unreasonable restrictions on liberty of inquiry and discussion. We are much in danger of it."<sup>1</sup>

While Professor Smith rejected the theory of verbal inerrancy and held views concerning the origin and date of the Pentateuch that were at that time regarded as radical, he was yet thoroughly evangelical in his theology and a firm believer in the inspiration of the Bible. During his trial he said: 'If I am asked why I receive Scripture as the Word of God and as the only perfect rule of faith and life, I answer with all the Fathers of the Protestant Church, because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God, because in the Bible alone I find God drawing near to man in Christ Jesus and declaring to us in Him His will for our salvation.' "<sup>2</sup>

Professor Smith was soon elected to the chair of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, England, and the personal services of the most brilliant scholar, the most gifted teacher, and one of the most devoted sons of the Free Church, were lost to Presbyterianism.

"Of an unsettling tendency." It is worth while thinking about the phrase. Unsettling to what and to whom? If the most reactionary of conservatives

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Principal Rainy*, vol. I., pp. 316, 329.

<sup>2</sup> *Religious Controversies of Scotland*, p. 217.

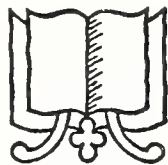


will trace his ecclesiastical lineage back far enough, he will come to a man, or to men, to whose views the phrase was applied by contemporaries, and rightly. Certainly Paul and Hus and Luther and Calvin and Knox and Roger Williams and Wesley would be the last to claim exemption. If these men had not unsettled something or somebody, they would long ago have been forgotten.

A generation has passed since Professor Smith was deposed from his chair, and there is perhaps not a Presbyterian theological school in Scotland today, unless it be among the isolated "Wee Frees," in which his views, in all essential points, are not taught. The Free Church of Scotland "has served herself heir to his prophetic mantle, and since his ejection has developed a strong liking for critical studies that may well be construed as an act of repentance and reparation. Robertson Smith has lit a candle in the Church that will not soon be put out. There are few, whether they are aware of it or not, whose knowledge of religious truth has not been broadened and enriched by the critical movements associated with his name."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Religious Controversies of Scotland*, p. 222.





APPENDIX E.

Aberdeen,

May 10, 1922

Dear Sir:

Your letter of April 27 has reached me this morning just as I am leaving home for ten days. You must therefore be content with a hurried answer.

I have not written upon evolution and have no right to give an authoritative opinion on it. But in common with other persons of intelligence I accept the theory. I have nowhere given "explicit expression" to my views. But as you have already gathered from my writings I believe as you say that "acceptance of the theory of evolution is perfectly consistent with evangelical Christianity."

You will find what I think of historical and religious evolution so far as Israel is concerned in the last sections of the Introduction to my Deuteronomy in the Cambridge Bible for Schools Series.

Yours truly,

(Signed) George Adam Smith.



## APPENDIX F.

There are few subjects, connected in any way with religion, about which there is more misapprehension and prejudice than about the higher critics and their work.

This prejudice has been ascribed in part to the title itself as suggesting egotism; but that this is not its true source is clear from the fact that there is no prejudice against the higher criticism of any other classic than the Bible. Both the lower and the higher criticism are methods of study that are applied to all literature where there is uncertainty as to a writer's exact words or meaning. Especially are these two kinds of study—two aspects rather of the one search after truth—indispensable in the case of all ancient classics; for there is almost always uncertainty as to the text and meaning of manuscripts written and perpetuated in languages and amid conditions differing from those with which we are familiar.

This prejudice, then, is not against the criticism of classical literature in general, but only against the criticism of the greatest of all classics, the Bible. Before seeking the source of this widespread prejudice, let us ask what the higher critic and the higher criticism are.

As to the word *higher*: Everyone knows what the word means in such expressions as the *higher mathematics* and the *higher learning*. It implies a lower mathematics or learning upon which the higher is built. Such is its meaning in the higher criticism of the Bible. It implies that there is a lower or more basic study of the Bible—as there is. This lower study of the Bible is the painstaking effort made by scholars to discover the exact words that were used by the forty or more men who wrote the Bible.

It may not be known to all readers of the Bible that we have not a single original or autograph manuscript

of any part of the Scriptures. All the manuscripts penned by the men who wrote the Bible have been lost. What manuscripts we now have are copies—not probably in any case of the original manuscripts, but of other copies; and much copying and recopying, as well as several centuries, intervened between the original manuscripts and those we now have.

One can easily see, therefore, how readily, through generations of copying and recopying, editing and re-editing, and translating into other languages, changes found their way into the text of the manuscripts. Most of these changes were unintentional, due in many cases to the drowsiness of the copyist—for one easily nods over such monotonous work. Some were intentional, made for various reasons. Occasionally a marginal note, made by a scribe, was incorporated in the text by a later scribe. The sum total of these textual variations runs into the thousands, but the variations, although so numerous, do not affect any important teaching of the Bible.

Now the work of the lower, or textual, criticism is to discover, by a thorough study and comparison of all the manuscripts of the Bible or parts of the Bible, what the text of the original manuscripts was. It is basic work, because we cannot understand accurately a writer's meaning until we know the exact words he used. Upon this lower work of discovering the original *words* of Scripture, the higher work of discovering the *meaning* of Scripture is based. The former is the lower criticism, the latter the higher criticism, of the Bible.

The words *critic* and *criticism*: These words come from a Greek word meaning *to discuss, to discriminate, to judge*. In every-day language critic and criticism suggest fault-finding of an objectionable kind. In the language of scholars this meaning has been almost lost. It is true that criticism, being discriminative, may rightly find fault with shoddy work; but other-

wise it is sympathetic and appreciative. Matthew Arnold defines criticism as "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world."

Among scholars the word critic means one who, by long study, as well as by taste, insight, and imagination, is qualified to write or speak with authority on some particular subject. For example, a Shakespearean critic is a scholar who has so thoroughly mastered the works of Shakespeare as to be able to explain difficulties of text and meaning, and to bring out Shakespeare's thought in a vivid and convincing way. So we have the art critic, the literary critic, the musical critic, and so forth—the word in every case meaning a student or scholar who is able to discuss, to discriminate, to judge, *with highly trained intelligence*, the subject matter of his chosen field.

Now this is exactly the meaning of the word when used of the class of students who have made the Bible their special subject of study. They are known as Biblical or higher critics: *higher*, because their work is based on the labors of the lower, or textual, critics; *critics*, because they have qualified themselves by years of hard study to speak with intelligence concerning the date, authorship, and meaning of the books of the Bible. It is clear therefore that there is no suggestion of egotism in either higher or critic as used by scholars.

The qualifications for competent Biblical criticism are very exacting. Higher critics must master the languages in which the Bible was written—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—as well as certain cognate languages. They must make a thorough study, not only of the history of the people of Israel, but also of certain periods in the history of the various neighboring peoples whose civilizations in any way influenced the writers of the Bible. They must study the best commentaries on the books of the Bible. In fact the require-

ments in the way of learning and accurate scholarship are so exacting, that Biblical critics rarely specialize in both Testaments. If to learning and scholarship higher critics are able to add insight and imagination, and judgment, they have the qualifications for becoming able and convincing interpreters of Scripture. Such men are authorities on the Bible in the same sense in which men are authorities in any other branch of knowledge.

The *aim* of the higher critic is that of every honest student of the Bible, however ignorant he may be: namely, to discover the truth. The *method* of the higher critic is to gather and study all the facts that can throw any light whatever on the Bible, and to draw only such conclusions as the facts warrant. It is here that the higher critics, like all competent specialists, are in a class by themselves; for while the most ignorant man can find truth enough in the Bible for daily guidance, there are hundreds of Biblical problems on which he, and even well educated men, are wholly incapable of giving an intelligent opinion. It should be kept in mind that the Bible is a collection of books covering a period of authorship of approximately a thousand years; that, apart from its simpler teachings, it is far and away the most difficult book to understand that the average man ever reads; and that to solve the many problems of origin, date, authorship, structure, meaning, and canonicity that arise, such learning and scholarship are required as only specialists who have given their lives to the study of the Bible can possibly possess.

Now if the aim and method of the higher critics are those of all specialists, and if higher critics are simply Bible students having exceptional qualifications for understanding the Bible, why is there such a deep-seated and wide-spread prejudice against them and their work? To this question at least three answers may be given:



First, the thorough study of the Bible by the higher critics has made untenable many former views about the Bible—such as the date, authorship, structure, and significance of many of its books. It has shown that some of the older views about the Bible, such as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, rested on tradition, ancient indeed, but often wholly unsupported by historical or literary evidence.<sup>1</sup> But these older views had become so much an organic part of men's belief in the Bible as a revelation from God, that to reject them was like rejecting the Bible itself. What made matters more serious, the modern view seemed to call in question the authority of Christ, since certain references of His to the Old Testament were understood, erroneously however, as giving his *imprimatur* to traditional views.<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that the new views awakened alarm and opposition. Men hold their religious convictions more tenaciously than they do any others, and the work of the higher critics looked like an attack on the very source and foundation of the Christian religion. Naturally, the higher critics and their views were denounced with extreme bitterness. But the crucial question in the controversy was, on which side lay the weight of evidence; and time has pretty well answered that question. The newer views have been accepted by almost all Biblical scholars of repute; they are found in the best commentaries and Bible dictionaries; and they are assumed in the best histories of Israel, histories of the Canon of Scripture, and Biblical theologies. Rarely does anyone now, who values his reputation as a scholar among scholars, come out openly for the older views. One consequence of this

<sup>1</sup> "It would not be easy now," says Dr. Orr, "to gain assent to the proposition that the Pentateuch, as it stands, is the work of Moses." (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 121.)

<sup>2</sup> "It may readily be admitted that when Jesus used popular language about 'Moses' or 'Isaiah,' He did nothing more than designate certain books, and need not be understood as giving *ex cathedra* judgments on the intricate critical questions which the contents of these books raise." (*Revelation and Inspiration*, p. 153.)

is that the traditional school is gradually becoming non-productive in the field of Biblical scholarship. Even in the most conservative theological seminaries many of the books used are by higher critics. In certain fields of Biblical study there is nothing else to use.

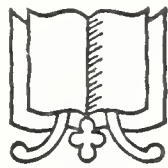
Speaking for myself, I can only say that the modern view of the Bible has made it a far more interesting book, has solved many otherwise insoluble difficulties, has clothed the Old Testament prophets with new power, and has not touched any essential truth as revealed by God in Christ.

The second reason why there is so much prejudice against the higher critics is the failure of ultra-conservative books and religious papers to distinguish between different schools of critics. For example, often no distinction is made between iconoclastic writers who are hostile to the Bible, and the Christian scholars of the believing school of critics. Time and again will one see the higher critics represented as secret enemies of the Bible and of the Christian religion, doing their deadly work *within* the Church, and thus comparing unfavorably with Paine and Ingersoll, who at least had the honesty, so it is said, to stay *out* of the Church. I have read Paine and Ingersoll, and while I admire their courage I can only say that to compare these sciolists, who had not a spark of Biblical scholarship, and who attacked the Bible only for the purpose of discrediting it—to compare these men with such scholars as Davidson and Driver and Adam Smith and a host of others like them, is little less than a disgrace. It shows inexcusable ignorance of the Christian spirit and fine constructive work of the best Biblical critics.

Lastly, one rarely finds in the conservative religious press a fair discussion of the newer views. The evidence and arguments supporting them are never given. Simply on the ground that modern views conflict with traditional views, it is *assumed* that the former are wrong. This policy may keep a Church doctrinally

“safe” and “sound,” but it also keeps it mentally enfeebled so far as any intelligent discussion of Biblical and religious problems is concerned.

What we need in this whole matter is such a deep faith in the religion of Christ, and in truth, as will forever emancipate us from this short-sighted policy of timidity, evasion, and suppression.





### APPENDIX G.

Our Church places its theological students in a cruel position. They are instructed in an exceedingly elaborate creed, parts of which it is simply impossible to reconcile with present-day conceptions of truth and justice. At the end of three years these students, to enter the Presbyterian ministry at all, must take a vow that binds them to this elaborate confession. No matter what doubt or misgiving they may feel, this rigid vow is the one door-way into the Presbyterian ministry. Besides assent to this creed, ministers are supposed to be loyal to certain views of their Church that are extra-confessional.

A little reflection will make it clear to any intelligent man that a young student cannot, after only three years of study, know what his real theology is; for a man's theology, if it is truly his own, is the precipitate of continuous and deep thinking about God and man and nature in their inter-relationships. But such thinking requires years of reading and observation and experience. A man's theology grows with his growth, often changing profoundly with his increasing knowledge of life. It is plain, therefore, that an inexperienced seminary graduate, when called upon to give an *ex animo* assent to a system of theology that antedates many of the presuppositions of modern thought, is really in no position either to affirm or to deny its truth; yet if afterwards he ever dissents from parts of it, he is accused of dishonesty in violating his ordination vow. But what about the ethics of a procedure that puts young men in such a position?

Dr. Rainy, in a very suggestive but rather subtle and indecisive chapter on "Creeds," has this to say of the dangers of subscription to them: "Confessions, as I believe, are practically indispensable to the Church. They confer also most important benefits on those who are called to accept them, first by the guidance

which they supply, and secondly by the decision and precision which the necessity of reckoning with them brings into men's views. But they do unquestionably tend, and they may sometimes powerfully tend, to bias men's minds with reference to the single-eyed investigation of truth. On this point, it is quite truly said by opponents of confessions, that they operate not so often by disposing a man to conceal his formed opinions, but rather by disposing him to avoid frank and perfectly sincere investigation when doubts or questions arise which, as he foresees, might bring him into collision with confessional teaching. He is tempted to form a habit of undue deference to the human document, to the consent which it expresses, and the antiquity which invests it. He is tempted to let himself be paralyzed with reference to every movement that might eventually lead him out of the road which human hands have mapped out for him."<sup>1</sup>

Now men of real intelligence are not "opponents of confessions," to use Dr. Rainy's phrase; but they may be opponents of the *abuse* of confessions. Presbyterian ministers should know Calvinism in all its doctrinal details and throughout its history. It is part of their historic inheritance. It was a great system and exerted a profound and far-reaching influence not only on religious, but on social and political life as well. Our debt to it is incalculable. But to bind young men of this century to an iron-clad theological system of the 16th and 17th centuries is to tempt them to disloyalty to the thing that constitutes the very soul of Calvinism: namely, the sovereignty of God over reason and conscience—a sovereignty that makes love of truth, which is the mind's love of God, and the preservation of one's moral and intellectual integrity to be among the highest of religious duties.

I have spoken of distinctive doctrinal Calvinism as

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<sup>1</sup> *Delivery and Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 255. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. 1874.

being in part obsolescent. Do the facts bear out such a verdict? Dr. Williston Walker, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale University and author of the best short life of Calvin, writing with both sympathy and discrimination, says: "In Calvin's exposition the theology of the Reformation age rose to a clearness and dignity of statement and a logical precision of definition that have never been surpassed. A logician of critical acumen, a lawyer by training, a master of Latin and of French expression, a humanist, a student of history and of Christian antiquity, Calvin brought to the service of Christian theology gifts which must always make the *Institutes* a classic presentation of doctrine. But to recognize the transcendent qualities of his work is by no means to assert its perpetuity. His system has been no exception to the general rule of modification and supersession which seems essential to all progress even in the apprehension of the deepest of Christian verities. Calvin's system has stood the test of time better than most expositions of religious truth; but it has suffered a general attrition, and though the degrees in which its various aspects are now rejected are very unequal, it is nowhere held in its pristine integrity; while the larger part of the Protestant world, even in the churches which most honour his memory, has turned far aside from it."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Walker's opinion as to the present status of distinctive doctrinal Calvinism finds confirmation, if any is needed, in the not very optimistic view of Dr. B. B. Warfield (1851-1921), late professor of Theology in Princeton Theological Seminary. Dr. Warfield was probably the most learned and most consistent of recent day doctrinal Calvinists. He says: "It must be confessed that the fortunes of Calvinism in general are not at present at their flood. In America, to be sure, the controversies of the earlier half of the nineteenth century compacted a body of Calvinistic

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<sup>1</sup> *John Calvin*, p. 424. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1906.

thought which gives way but slowly: and the influence of the great theologians who adorned the churches during that period is still felt. . . . Even in Scotland there has been a remarkable decline in strictness of construction ever since the days of William Cunningham [died 1861] and Thomas J. Crawford [died 1876].”<sup>1</sup> In America it “gives way but slowly.” But it gives way; and the reason is that the Calvinistic intelligence, functioning in the 20th century, finds no adequate expression in the Five Points.<sup>2</sup> “Men do not put new wine into old wineskins.” If John Calvin were living today, he would still be a humanist and a disciple of the new learning—a child of the renaissance of the nineteenth century.

Presbyterians would understand the necessity of reforming parts of our theology, if they knew what doctrinal Calvinism really is; but not one in a hundred does know. I have before me a “Short Catechism for Young Children,” written by a Scotch Presbyterian in the 18th century (1764) and printed in the United States since 1900. In it is the following:

Q. *Does your wicked heart make all your thoughts, words, and actions sinful?*

A. Yes, I do nothing but sin.

Q. *What is original sin?*

A. It is that sin in which I was conceived and born.

Q. *Doth original sin wholly defile you, and is it sufficient to send you to hell, though you had no other sin?*

A. Yes.

Q. *What are you then by nature?*

A. I am an enemy to God, a child of Satan, and an heir of hell.

That is a bit of distinctive doctrinal Calvinism. Contrast such a morbid and gloomy view of child nature with the wholesome sunshine of the following:

<sup>1</sup> *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, article “Calvinism.” Funk & Wagnalls Co. 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Calvinism “laid a profound emphasis,” says Professor Walker, “on Christian intelligence. Its appeal was primarily to the intellect, and it has trained a sturdy race of thinkers on the problems of the faith wherever it has gone. It has been the foe of popular ignorance, and of shallow, emotional, or sentimental views of Christian truth.” (*Life of Calvin*, p. 428). On the problems of the faith today we are training a race of non-thinkers.



And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them. (Mark 10:13-16, Am. R.V.)











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